Merrick County's 100th Year
1858
1958
LONE TREE STATION
C.E.P.
Jack Stable
P.S.H.
C.W.A.
W.G.B.
Sammy
Sib
Isaac
BRIGHAM YOUNG
OFUA
JOHN C. FREMONT
JASON
W.S.
E.H.
Y.P.
J.K.
J.T.M.
John
Lone Tree Stage Station
LONE TREE - THE SOLITARY GUARDIAN OF THE PLATTE
UNION PACIFIC

In Recognition

If this small souvenir booklet were to become a huge volume it could name relatively few of the fine people and moving events that have combined over the past century in making Merrick County the greatest place on earth to call Home.

We do not presume to call this a history of Merrick County. Its primary purpose is to remind us of the rich heritage that is ours. Through the life and efforts of sturdy men and women, who traveling to the west, viewed the rich stretches of the Platte Valley and said, "This is the place to establish our homes and rear our families."

Fundamental to the growth and success of any great development are certain basic forces. In this little volume you will find a brief review of some of the forces that we feel have combined to develop Merrick County on a high level. The church has contributed to a high moral plane of living. A strong educational program has given breadth and vision. A rich agricultural and industrial development have made our county one of the garden spots of America. These, coupled with a host of civic minded and forward looking business and professional men, the county over, have brought us to a position of justifiable pride and a feeling of secure confidence in the future.

In a hurried publication such as this we have undoubtedly made errors in accuracy. We have purposely refrained from detailed personal eulogies. This booklet is dedicated to all of the people of Merrick County who have contributed to its progress.

You will find brief tribute to some of our early settlers. Pictures, old and new, a quick cronology, plus many other interesting features.

We wish to acknowledge our debt to pioneers Ed. Persinger and the late P. S. Heaton, two of Merrick County's distinguished citizens, from whose histories of Merrick County we have been able to obtain much of our historical data.

A special thank you to Miner Harris for his hours and hours of digging out, writing and arranging of materials. Without his experience and endless effort this publication might have been well nigh impossible.

A word of appreciation to the Centennial Board and to the special contributors who have spent many hours from busy schedules in planning and promoting this great celebration.

Let's participate, let's have fun, but, above all, let's remember the tremendous obligation we have in passing on to the generations who are to succeed us the same rich heritage that has been ours.

How Merrick County Got Its "Shape"

With a "panhandle" about 200 rods wide and nine miles long extending up between Nance and Howard Counties, Merrick is one of the most peculiarly shaped counties of Nebraska. There is another panhandle, 5 1/2 miles wide and six miles long at the northeast end of the county. Most of the northern boundary is a series of jogs, and very little of it coincides with section lines, and much less, township lines. The county line cuts across farmers' fields in more cases than not.

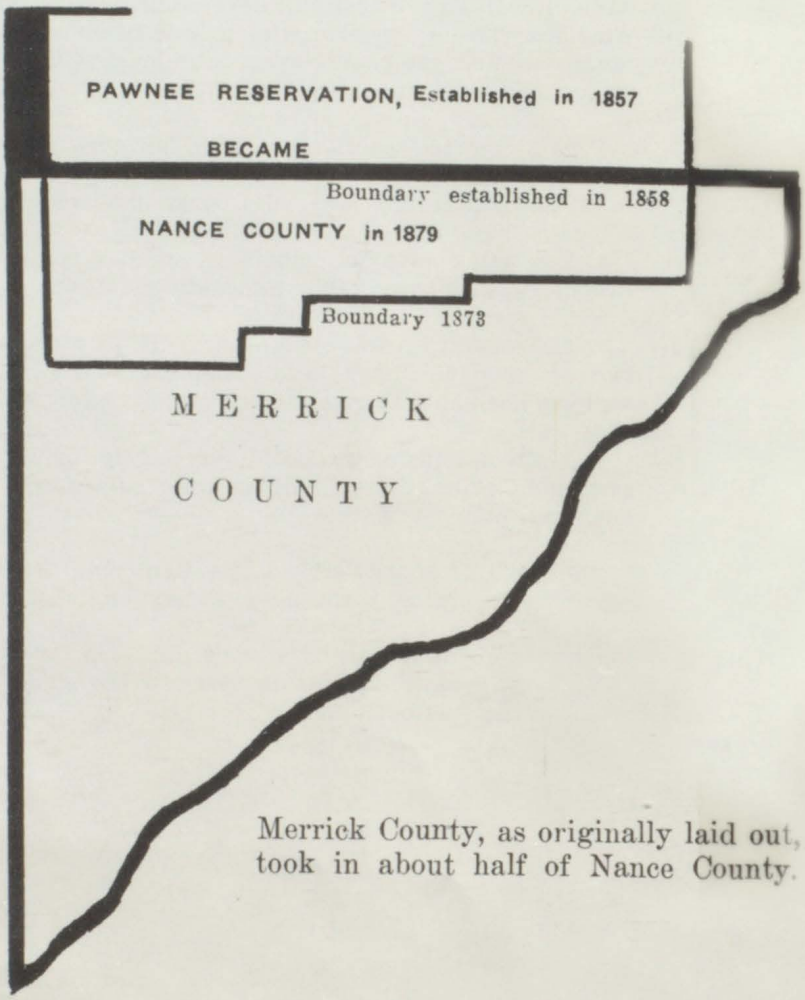
How come that Merrick County came to have such a fantastic shape?

When the Territorial government established Merrick County one hundred years ago, its boundary on the north was a straight line extending from the north tip of the present "Merrick County Strip" due east 36 miles. (See accompanying plat). Merrick's first boundaries were all straight lines except on the south where it followed the Platte River.

In 1857, the year before Merrick County was laid out, the Pawnee Indian Reservation had been established. Merrick County took in nearly half of this reservation. The Pawnees, numbering about 4,000 had been roving over much of eastern Nebraska, north of the Platte River. By 1859, practically all of them had settled on the reservation. They were generally friendly towards the Whites, but their life here was not too happy. They were victims of raids and bloodshed inflicted by the Sioux, Poncas and other warlike tribes. A few years later the Pawnees began their emigration to Indian Territory (Oklahoma). By 1876, practically all the Pawnees had left Nebraska.

In 1873, an act of legislation took from Merrick County that portion of the reservation that had been within its borders. Thus Merrick County lost about 180 square miles of territory and was left with its present ungainly Merrick County Strip, and its jagged boundary line along its north border. The Indians had wanted both banks of the Loup River included in their reservation. So the southern border was jogged to coincide with the northeasterly course of the river.

In 1897, the Pawnee Reservation was made into a county, named Nance in honor of the newly elected governor of the state, Albinus Nance. In 1875, Boone County was established north of the reservation. In 1881, Nance County annexed a strip of "unorganized territory" about 200 rods wide and six miles long at its west edge, lying north of the Merrick County "Strip." When Boone County was organized, it might easily have included this area. It would then have learned the disadvantages of having a "strip" to administer. This area is shown in black on the map.



Merrick County, as originally laid out, took in about half of Nance County.

Compliments of
HESSELGESSER OLDS
Central City

CENTENNIAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS
BACK ROW: (Left to Right) Warren Marsh, Arthur Klingenberg, P. C. Woodward, Leo Stines, Leslie Lindahl (President) E. H. Tooker, Holly Wilhoft. FRONT ROW: Pat Lewis, (Secretary-Treasurer) Flora Nordstrom, Mrs. Alice Best, Mrs. Floyd Gorgen (Vice President), Mrs. Geo. Morgan.

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BACK ROW: (Left to Right) Warren Marsh, Donald Sampson, Amer Lincoln. FRONT ROW: Miner Harris, D. E. Magnuson, Mrs. Herbert Lock, Fred A. Marsh.

CENTENNIAL BELLES
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
BACK ROW: (Left to Right) Mrs. Don Shull, Mrs. Donald Booth, (Secretary-Treasurer) Mrs. Lew Charron, Mrs. Warren Marsh, Mrs. Charles Fish. SEATED: Mrs. Gordon Reeves, (President), Mrs. Wesley Beck.

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JUSTICE & LOCKE DRUG STORE
Central City

Chronology

"IN THE BEGINNING"

The early history of Merrick County seems to center about an old cottonwood tree, which in those "desert days", stood a lonesome but welcome sight on the north bank of the Platte River. Legend--such as so young a country as ours dares to aspire to--hints to us that the old "Lone Tree" was the place of assembly for the red man in the days of his undisputed possession. Beneath the shadow of the old cottonwood the Chief is said to have summoned his braves for consultation concering a proposed hunt of the then plentiful bison. Or perhaps some lone traveler on his way east or west, used it as a guide on his way across the plains.

From a History of Merrick County, 1895, by C. E. Persinger

1541 - Coronado and his band of Spaniards from Mexico may have approached or crossed over the Platte into what is now Merrick County.

1720 - Pedro de Villasur, another Spanish explorer, with a small army, crossed the Platte River a short distance east of where Chapman now stands, proceeded east along the northern part of Merrick County down the Loup River valley, arriving at a point near where Columbus now stands, in August, 1720.

1790 - It was perhaps while George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams were getting the U. S. Government started in the east that a certain cottonwood seed germinated in the Platte Valley about five miles southwest of where Central City now stands.

1833 - Lone Tree was known to travelers and explorers.

1840 - Indians held council under the Lone Tree.

1850 - Lone Tree was a famous landmark on the trail west.

1858 - Merrick County was established by the Territorial Legislature by an act passed November 5, 1858, which defined its boundaries. Henry W. DePuy of Dodge County, Speaker of the House of Representatives, sponsored the act and the county was named in honor of his wife, whose maiden name was Elvira Merrick. Elvira was named as the county seat. There was no such town at the time but it was proposed to lay it out about two miles south of where Clarks now stands. However, nothing ever was done about it, and no such town ever really existed. . . .Western Stage Company selected the Lone Tree as a station on its route.

1859 - Jason Parker took up squatters rights to land in Merrick County in April and brought his family in May, 1859, the first settler with a family in the county.....James Vieregg was the first homesteader in Merrick County, filing his claim on September 5, 1859. A few hours later the same day, Jesse Shoemaker and Chas. Eggerton also filed. Vieregg's claim was about nine miles southwest of where Chapman now stands, and Shoemaker and Eggerton located a few miles east of Chapman..... Jesse Shoemaker's place became known as "Shoemaker's Point", an important station in the early days, and was the county's first post office opened in 1861 and discontinued in 1864.

1860 - Of the twelve men in Merrick County subject to military duty at the outbreak of the Civil War, seven enlisted. They were: Frank Jewell, George Thompson, Ed Parker, Joseph Whaley, Charles Hartley, Henry C. Martin and Benjamin Hurley. Each served his full term of enlistment, and none was killed or seriously wounded.

1861 - The first post office was located at Shoemaker's Point, with W. H. Mitchell, postmaster. Before that, settlers generally had their mail addressed to Columbus, from where it was forwarded to them by the kindness of the postmaster who had the stage drivers carry it in their pockets.....Mrs. John L. Martin of near Shoemaker's Point was the only physician between Columbus and Fort Kearney from 1861 to 1866.....The population of Merrick County was estimated at less than forty persons.

1863 - W. T. Burroughs was the first white child born in Merrick County, son of Mr. & Mrs. W. W. Burroughs (date of birth un-

certain). Richard Eatough and family settled on or near the present site of Central City in 1863. Their daughter, Mary, was the first white girl born in the county. Mary later became Mrs. George Wolcott. W. T. Burroughs died December 5, 1927....For years the Lone Tree had been visible for twenty miles up or down the valley and it had been green and vigorous in 1860, but it withered and died in 1863. Numerous camp fires under it, carvings and posters nailed to its trunk and the extremely dry weather of 1863 probably spelled its doom. During a big windstorm in 1865 it crashed to the ground. Eugene Hilton, owner of the land on which the tree stood, said names had been carved on the trunk and lower branches up to a height of over thirty feet....The Platte River was dry from August to November, the first time in known history of white man or Indian. It was a great hardship to settlers as they depended on the Platte for stock water and had difficulty digging water holes in the soft sand. The winds caused sand dunes six feet high to form in the dry bed of the river. The pioneers feared a landslide in the Rocky Mountains had shut off the Platte waters forever....Frederick Heide was elected to the Legislature to represent Merrick and Hall Counties, and unorganized territory west.

1864 - Hall County tried to "steal" a six mile wide strip off Merrick County. Representative Heide introduced a bill in the Legislature to take six miles off the west side of Merrick County and attach it to Hall County. On Friday night, January 29, John L. Martin heard about this bill being pushed through the Legislature. On Saturday a meeting was called and resolutions adopted denouncing Heide's action. Before night every citizen living within the strip had signed the remonstrance. By Sunday night all other citizens of the county had signed. By the time the petition reached Governor Alvin Saunders, the bill had already been passed and signed by the Governor, but a new bill repealing Heide's law was quickly passed four days before the Legislature adjourned.....

The organization of a county government and the first election was held. In the fall of 1863, agitation for organization began. By spring they were ready for an election which was held on April 18. There were three voting places: Eagle Island for the Eastern Precinct; Lone Tree for the Middle Precinct; and Shoemaker's Point for the Western Precinct. Eastern Precinct polled six ballots; Middle, nine ballots; and Western twelve ballots. There was not much contest except for County Clerk, for which office W. H. Mitchell defeated W. W. Burroughs. Other officers elected were: T. F. Parker, Sheriff; Wells Brewer, Treasurer; H N. Lathrop, Prosecuting Attorney; J. G. Brewer, Probate Judge; and Jason Parker, Jesse Shoemaker and George Gelston, County Commissioners. The legal part of carrying out the election was taken care of by Platte County officers....During the 1860's and until 1875, there was no bridge across the Platte River from Merrick County. Duckings in the river were frequently experienced by those who tried to ford the stream...."Billboard" advertising developed early. Molasses, flour, sugar, bacon, tobacco, cigars, whiskey, and other necessities were advertised on billboards at the stage coach stations.....While Jason Parker was away for a time his son put out the following road sign: "130 miles to Omaha, 13 miles to Shoemaker's Point, 40 miles to Columbus, 70 miles to Kearney, 20 miles to Eagle Island. We came from New York. We are going to live here. There is no telegraph office you damn fool." It is recorded that upon the return of "Uncle Jason" the last sentence was immed-

Chas. Combs' original house on his homestead, built in 1864, about midway between Central City and Chapman near the river. Picture taken in 1904.

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and
FRANK McCONNELL,
Plumbing and Heating

iately removed....The first wedding in Merrick County was on Christmas Day, 1864, when Miss Viola Parker became Mrs. John M. Kyes. They were both from New York state. They settled on a farm in the Chapman vicinity..... 1864 was the year of a big Indian war scare. The Indians were getting restless and jealous because of the encroachment of the whites on their hunting grounds and because of the building of railroad and telegraph lines. So many of the white men being in the army, leaving only women and children on the homesteads, added to the worry and fright. Many families gave up their homesteads to return east. News came of attacks by Indians on immigrant trains and traders from Fort Kearney. This caused panic and Merrick County was nearly depopulated. Messrs. Brewer and Eugene Hilton were among the few who remained. Following the Civil War, most of the old settlers returned. In the meantime there had been many terrifying clashes and incidents with the Indians. The following items in a diary kept by John L. Martin show the danger of the time:

May 29 - Sioux (300) here; stole muslin.
June 5 - Indians here. Bartley stabbed.
June 6 - Indians drove away cattle.
June 9 - Military company camped here.
June 21 - 500 Indians here; tried to stab me.
June 23 - Report 1000 Indians coming down the valley.
June 24 - Went to Jim's (James Vieregg) and stayed all night.
June 26 - Started for home for assistance.

The item of June 21 refers to a fracas when several Indians came up where Mr. Martin and his son, Henry, were breaking sod, with a "double header" composed of two oxen and two horses. While Henry was occupied in fixing the chain by which the horses were attached to the plow, the Indians demanded one of Mr. Martin's oxen. Mr. Martin refused and started around the plow when the Indian attempted to stab him, and only failed because Mr. Martin jumped backward. Henry, at this juncture, threw the monkey wrench, which he was using, at the Indian and knocked him down. Then Mr. Martin jumped on one of the horses and started for the barn, Henry following on one of the oxen. They ran the stock into the stable and then made for the house, where they frightened the Indians away by running around in the house and shoving their three rifles through the various loop holes, thus leading the Indians to believe there were several men with guns in the house. The Indians, however, took with them much of the family's clothing which had that morning been washed and hung out to dry.

1866 - The railroad was built through Merrick County that year. Railway traffic took away much of the farmer's (settlers') markets for hay and grain which stage coaches and railroad workers had consumed--the first "farm surplus problem."..... In February, contracts were let for getting out all the railroad ties that could be obtained on the uncultivated islands in the Platte....The first schoolhouse in the county was in District No. 1, built in October, of logs, with roof of willow brush and sod. The cost was less than $100.00. Money was raised by subscription. Miss Ellen Abbott (afterwards Mrs Dodge) taught through the winter. In April she was paid $33.00 of public money....The Union Pacific planned the location of towns about 11 miles apart between Columbus and Grand Island, as you find them today.

1867 - John L. Martin was chosen as first County Superintendent of Public Instruction.... Horse stealing was still considered a capital crime by many people in Merrick County..... Indians caused considerable trouble by much stealing of livestock and other property.

1868 - Two boys, fifteen and sixteen years of age, were murdered by Indians January 6, 1868. They were Christian Goettche and Christian Thramm. They were living with Thramm's uncle, John Vieregg. The day before the murder, Vieregg and H. A. Klingenburg, accompanied by the two boys, started on a hunting trip from their homes near Chapman. They were headed for the Loup River and camped for the night between the Loup River and Elk Creek. The next morning a blizzard began, but Vieregg and Klingenburg wanted to try for an elk before starting back home. They left the boys at the camp. When they had gone a short distance they heard shots at the camp, and returned, finding that the boys had been murdered with their own weapons. The horses and all camp equipment were gone. They found tracks of seven Indians in the snow. The graves of the boys are on the William Johnson farm southwest of Chapman, and were marked some twenty years ago by descendents of Merrick and Hall County pioneers. This is the first recorded murder of white people by Indians, although there were many instances of fighting and bloodletting on both sides with knives, guns and other weapons....First building boom began in 1868 in Lone Tree.

1869 - The railroad found coal in the western states to use as fuel for their locomotives, and suddenly stopped buying cordwood from local woodcutters. With this rich source of income cut off, there was a wave of business

failures in Lone Tree. Some merchants closed up shop and moved to the farm.

William Shoulders and John Sanford were murdered June 15, 1869, by Indians who had stolen a mule from the Samuel McCathron farm, and two horses from the John L. Martin farm. The Indians were sighted on the south bank of the Platte River. Shoulders, who was employed on the McCathron farm, and Sanders crossed the river. As they were landing on the south bank they were seen to hurriedly jump back into the water, as several Indians on horseback galloped up and fired on the two white men. A rescue party was formed, and six young men crossed the river. They found only the remains of a recent campfire, and a fresh human scalp, recognized as that of Shoulders. The bodies of the two men were never found.

1871 - July 5, 1871, a "great" tornado crossed southern Merrick County in an easterly direction. It lifted roof from the Lone Tree depot, destroyed a part of Bryant's Hotel, smashed a blacksmith shop, many small houses, a good part of Traver & May's lumber yard and one life was lost. When Elnathan Phelps' home a mile east of town was hit and destroyed, Mr. Phelps and four children were eating supper. They were carried some eighty feet in the air and cast to the ground about eighty yards from where the building stood. The dead body of Mr. Phelps was found hanging in the limbs of an uprooted cottonwood tree, while his children were found lying in the debris near him. The children all recovered without suffering serious injury Household furniture was scattered as far as two miles away.....The first court house was built in 1871. Before that time the county officials kept their official records and books chiefly in their homes.....There was only one house in Clarks and that was the Union Pacific section house.

1872 - The first newspaper was published March 21, 1872, at Lone Tree, "The Merrick County News," - Henry Kelsey, editor.

1873 - The famous blizzard of April 14, 1873, caught the pioneers unaware, as they had been accustomed to balmy weather in Nebraska springtimes. One death resulted at Lone Tree. A young man named Barnhouse started out from the Central City House to the printing office and became bewildered in the terrible wind and snow. A search party went out to find him, with hands joined to keep from getting lost from each other. They went south a mile and returned in the face of the blizzard but found no trace. After the storm, the boy's body was found frozen in the ice of the Platte River near Parker's Island only a short distance from a clump of bushes, whose protection might have saved his life. Tom Kelly, west of Lone Tree, went to his barn to feed his stock and stayed there all night rather than face the storm back to the house. N. R. Persinger on his homestead nine miles north of Lone Tree went out in the storm with an arm load of hay for his horses. As he went around the corner of the barn the wind threw him down and rolled him and the hay over and over. He righted himself again but his cap had disappeared. Two miles away the cap was found lodged against a neighbor's barn. The finders, thinking a lost traveler had been frozen to death on the prairie, were alarmed and frightened. There were probably several deaths in the county caused by the blizzard of 1873.

1874 - The "Grasshopper Years" were 1874 and 1875. It was disaster for the pioneers. The great hordes of grasshoppers arrived July 21, 1874, early in the forenoon. About five days later they left borne by a high wind from the north, after they had devoured every green plant. They "darkened the sun at midday." Rising to fly away "the sound was like thunder or the beating of waves on a rock-bound coast," "at night one could hear them eating in a cornfield." The numbers were so vast that they "actually stopped trains by forming in swarms on the rails, so that the drive wheels of the engine could not secure traction." There was joy when the hoppers left, but many families were ruined financially by their voracious appetites.

1875 - The town of Lone Tree became officially "Central City," after quite a fight. Those in favor of the change argued that the name, Lone Tree, was inappropriate because the town was located five miles from where the tree had stood, and, besides, the name Lone Tree seemed to implicate that there was only one tree in the vicinity, suggestive of a barren country.

1878 - Early in June, 1878, Merrick County was visited by another tornado more severe but not as fatal as the 1871 tornado. Some buildings ruined or badly wrecked in Warm Slough area and Central City were: schoolhouse in District 27 was caught up, dashed to pieces and scattered like chaff; Stewart's residence; Joseph Gray's house; other buildings and livestock lost; but almost miraculously, all families were unhurt.

1879 - The County voted for a proposal which led to the building of the Burlington & Missouri Railroad from Lincoln to Central City, after

about seven years bitter negotiation and argument. The project had started in 1872 with negotiations with the Midland Pacific for construction of such a line. The road was completed by June 1, 1880. The Burlington extended its line northwestward in 1887, which resulted in the founding of Archer and Palmer.

1880 - Merrick County felt that it had passed its "pioneer" stage.....Blowing up a Central City saloon intensified a local temperance fight ... State G. A. R. reunion held at Central City.

1882 - Year of the big hail storm over much of the county.....and even a worse one in 1884.

1886 - The Nebraska Central College, a new Methodist College, opened for classes.

1887 - The Burlington Railroad built its line from Central City northwest through the county, and Archer and Palmer were started as towns.

1888 - The year of the big blizzard, January 12. No lives lost in Merrick County but many harrowing experiences. Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Miller of Mead Precinct lost their way when returning home. Their team floundering around, stumbled into Prairie Creek, and Mr. and Mrs. Miller got wet. They found a deserted house and spent the night inside. It was 35 degrees below zero. They suffered severely but got home alive the next day. L. C. Hart, loading hay from a stack, burrowed into the stack, pulled his two dogs in after him, and spent the night quite comfortably. Mr. Bice, teaching school near Chapman, spent the night in the schoolhouse with his students.

1892 - One of the first associations in Central City was the Municipal Improvement Association, organized on May 11. The object was to organize Central City and vicinity into a sanitary district.....At the meeting of the City Council held on May 19, the lighting problem of Central City was solved, when the Council voted to purchase thirty gasoline lamp posts.

1896 - The Loup River was at high flood stage, the first known to white man. It flooded the low lands and swept away the bridge north of Palmer Again, 51 years later, on July 7, 1947, it carried away the approach to the bridge and changed the channel enough that the bridge had to be lengthened 180 feet.

1903 - On June 16, the Commercial Club of Central City was organized, with 25 citizens present. President--G. H. Gray; Vice-President--B. J. Hilsabeck; Secretary--P. S. Heaton; Treasurer--E. H. Bishop.

1904 - On February 20th, a group of fifteen old settlers met at the office of J. G. Holden for the purpose of organizing the Old Settlers Association of Merrick County. The constitution stated that an annual meeting should be held between July 1 and October 1. Eligible to membership were all persons who were residents of Nebraska prior to 1880: Officers elected were:

President . . Charles Wooster, Silver Creek
1st Vice President & Vice President for Central City . . . . . John Kyes
Vice President for Central Township. . . . Frank Jewell
Vice President for Mead Township. . . . . C. Newcomer
Vice President for Midland Township. . . . J. B. Templin
Vice President for Loup Township. . . . . Andy Templin
Vice President for Chapman Township. . . . Dan Donovan
Vice President for Prairie Creek Township . . . . . T. N. Gosnel
Vice President for Vieregg Township. . . . R. W. Campbell
Vice President for Prairie Island Township. . P. C. Neilson
Vice President for Lone Tree Township. . . . Henry Vanhusen
Secretary . . . . . Joe A. Hayes
Treasurer . . . . . Neil Withrow
Executive Committee . . . H. V. Persons and G. A. Clark

1911 - At a special election on May 31, Merrick County voters approved the bond proposition which bound the county with an indebtedness of $100,000.00 for the erection of a new county court house. The first court house was erected in 1871 and served the county for forty years. It was built at a cost of $18,000.00 The ceremonies for the cornerstone laying of the new building were under the direction of the Masonic Lodge and were celebrated May 22, 1912.

1913 - On April 24, the court house was dedicated with ceremonies conducted by the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. A large crowd was in attendance with high officers of lodges from many Nebraska towns. The Central City band led the parade, which started at 1:00 p.m. After dedication rituals, the speakers of the day were introduced. They were: Judge Lucas, J. Easton of St. Joseph, Missouri, and Judge

W. H. C. Rice, Central City. It was the first building in the state to be dedicated by the I. O. O. F.....A highlight in Merrick County was Booster Day, October 8, 1913, in the interest of the Lincoln Highway. Dr. Edward Glatfelter, Past President of the Platte Valley Transcontinental Highway Association, served as chairman of a committee which induced Lincoln Highway to use the Platte Valley route. The caravan, which was going from coast to coast in behalf of the highway, accepted the invitation to come to Merrick County and was met by a large delegation. Approximately 300 visitors and members composed the caravan, which spent several hours in Central City, with dinner being served in the basement of the new court house by members of the Central City Woman's Club. Despite the fact that the cars ploughed through mud and roads were in bad condition, the Association chose this territory for the Lincoln Highway. In 1913, Dr. Glatfelter organized and presided over the only Lincoln Highway Association meeting held outside of Detroit.

1917 - No other organization during World War I could take the place of the American Red Cross and in that organization the Merrick County Red Cross has just reasons for being proud of the work it did. The organization of the Merrick County Chapter was put in motion by Miss Nettie Jewell, chairman of a committee appointed by the Woman's Relief Corps. On May 4, representatives from the various women's organizations of the county met at Cuddington Hall for an organization meeting. Clarks made application for a branch on June 13; Silver Creek on July 9; Palmer on July 9; Midland on July 9; Archer on July 9; and Chapman on August 24. The largest membership on record during war time was 4107, which did not include the hundreds that joined through the Junior societies. The total amount raised for united war work purposes in the county was $21,883.60.

1918 - In January, a Home Guard Company was organized in Central City, with C. E. Clark as captain and a membership of 110.

1928 - The American Legion Drum & Bugle Corps, Lone Tree Post No. 6, were winners of a drum and bugle contest held at state convention of the American Legion at Grand Island, in June of 1928. Twenty-nine members were in the corps.

1929 - Hards Memorial Library, a gift to Central City and surrounding districts, from the late Mrs. Melvina C. Hards in memory of her husband, was dedicated on September 27. Open house was held during the afternoon and the dedication program was given in the evening. The library was presented to the City by Elmer E. Ross. Acceptance for the City was given by Mayor E. H. Bishop and acceptance for library board by the Rev. Roy S. True. Mrs. Herbert Lock spoke on "The Cultural Value of the Library."

1932 - At the meeting of the Merrick County Early Settlers Association held at North Park on August 17, the Merrick County Hospital Society was organized. The following five early settlers sponsored the society and donated the funds necessary for that year - Dr. Fred Fouts, Mrs. O. T. Bishop, Nettie Jewell, Mrs. Ida Willhoft and Joe A. Hayes. Mrs. O. T. Bishop, being daughter of James Vieregg who was the first homesteader in Merrick County, was elected President; Joe A. Hayes, settler in Merrick County in 1872, Secretary; and Nettie Jewell, Treasurer. Mrs. Ida Willhoft and Dr. Fouts were named on the Board of Directors. A constitution and by-laws in conformity with the State Historical Society were adopted. Antique articles collected by the Association are still on display in Hards Library club room.

A tornado swooped down suddenly one very hot day in early summer, and demolished the Standard Oil tanks along the tracks in Palmer, and tore up a good portion of the S. A. Foster Lumber Yard. It suddenly raised and spared most of the remainder of the town. Headed northeast, it hurled a two-by-four from the lumber yard through the front window of Linder's Hardware store, which is now the post office building.

1935 - A big Union Pacific express and mail train was derailed in June, at the west edge of Chapman. Most of the cars were upside-down or on their sides along the side of the track, and rails torn loose. No lives lost.

1936 - On January 16th, the snow had begun in the gloaming, and busily most of the time for six weeks continued heaping the hills and highways--especially the highways. After snow plows and men with scoops had opened roads, it was not unusual for the snow to be banked six to eight feet high at the side of the opened track for a distance of 40 to 80 rods.

PIONEERS: Below are some of the men whose families blazed the first trails in Merrick County.

Compliments of
CENTRAL MOTORS
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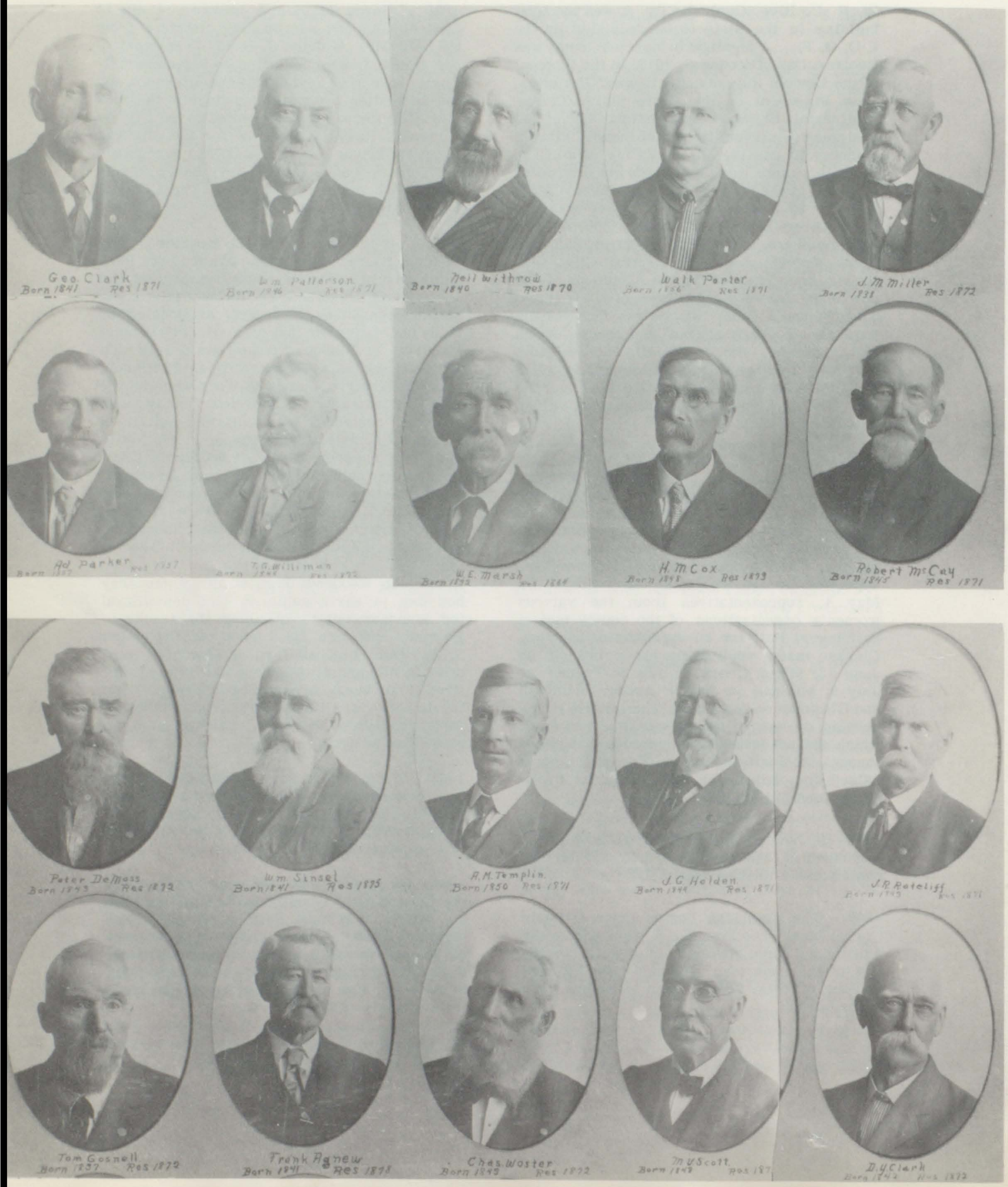
Central City



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Central City

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Central City

1915.

Extracurricular Activity

Even some of the early rural schools were not without their extracurricular activities. Edward Simmons, teacher in school district No. 13, was fond of music. So occasionally, as a diversion from the steady grind of regular studies, he and his pupils would remove the screws that held the school desks in place, and shove them all back against the walls. Then he would strike up a lively tune on his beloved violin, while the pupils danced a real hoe down, or whatever steps the music inspired. After a suitable period of relaxation, the teacher and pupils would quickly replace the seats and desks in their proper location, and study would be resumed.

One such time Mr. Simmons suspected that a visit from the County Superintendent was about due. So he asked the pupils to keep watch out the window for a man on horseback. Sure enough, a horse and rider was soon seen approaching the schoolhouse. The music and dancing stopped immediately, and everybody scurried to get the seats back in order. Bedlam was still continuing when the teacher went out into the yard to meet and greet the county superintendent. The greeting was cordial and continued long enough so that when the two men re-entered the building, perfect order reigned and the pupils were intent on their studies.

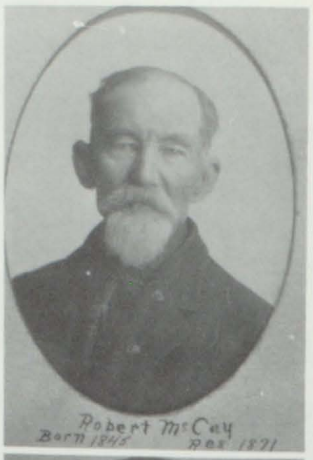
The county superintendent was John S. Patterson. The teacher's daughter, Miss Pearl Simmons, later became one of Merrick County's efficient County Superintendents.

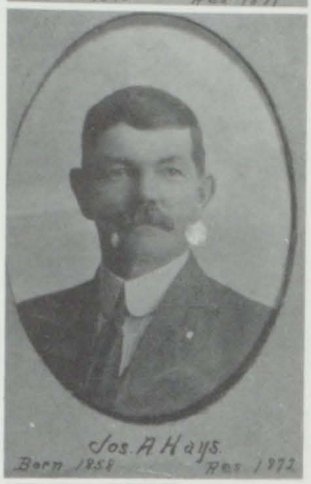
On the side, Mr. Ed. Simmons would occasionally play for dances. One Friday while teaching in district No. 37 east of Central City, he rushed the school through their classes, and let school out at 2:00 p.m. He walked to St. Paul, reaching there in time to play at a dance in the evening. Sometime the next afternoon some of his friends found him on the road in the vicinity of Palmer, walking back to Central City.

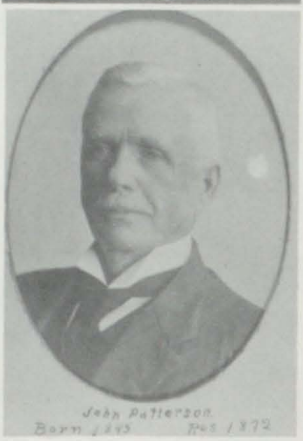
ROBERT G. BAIRD, 1871: born in Illinois in 1839; married in 1866 to Miss Mary J. McDonald; came to Merrick county in 1871 accompanied by his brother, James; homesteaded on Silver Creek eight miles northeast of Central City. Mr. Baird was a Civil War Veteran. Their children: William, Hugh, Lucinda (Mrs. W. S. Desch), Mary (Mrs. M. G. Scudder), Martha (Mrs. C. H. Crites), Elizabeth, Robert, Cora (Mrs. George Bockes), and David.

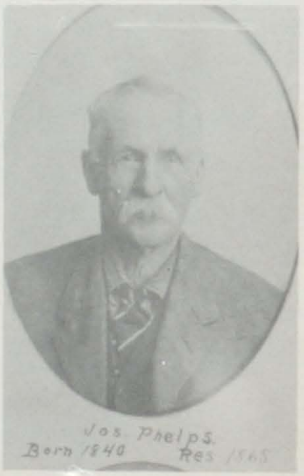
JOSEPH PHELPS, 1868: born in Illinois, 1859; served in Civil War; married to Miss Amelia Baker in Illinois in 1867; came to Lone Tree in 1868. During the first winter they had a narrow escape from a group of Indians. The Pawnees had been friendly until just before the Indians were to be placed on the reservation at Genoa, a band of them had gone on a hunting trip. Bison and other game was scarce and the Indians had stolen some stock. In the trouble that resulted the soldiers had killed seven or eight Indians causing a very bad feeling toward the white people. The Phelps had not heard of this and were not on guard when they went to Prairie Island to gather wood for the winter's fuel supply. When they met up with the small group of angry Indians, they barely got back to safety in time. Ida, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Phelps, married Mr. John Wilhoft and they made their home north of Central City. Five children were born in the Wilhoft family.

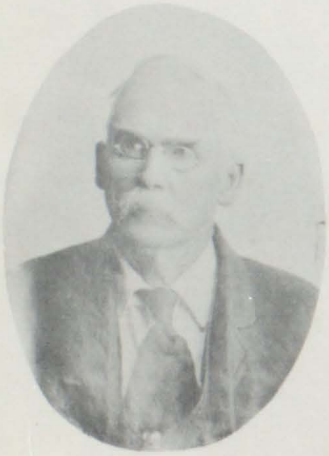
JOHN L. DAVIS, 1872: born in Morgan County, O., June 6, 1841; Civil War veteran; married 1866 to Elenor H. Posten. In 1872 homesteaded on sec. 32, twp. 14, R. 8, which now adjoins Palmer on the north. In 1888 was a pioneer Palmer business man, dealing in farm implements. Five children: including Elizabeth (Mrs. A. T. Ferris), Frank T., Ann E. (Mrs. A. J. McLellan), Elsie M. (Mrs. R. T. Linderman).



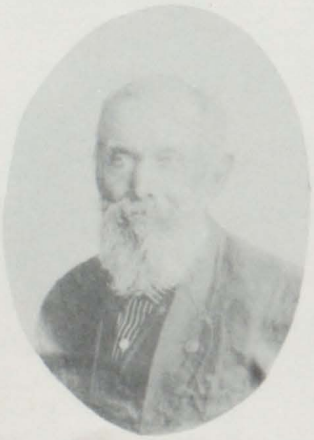






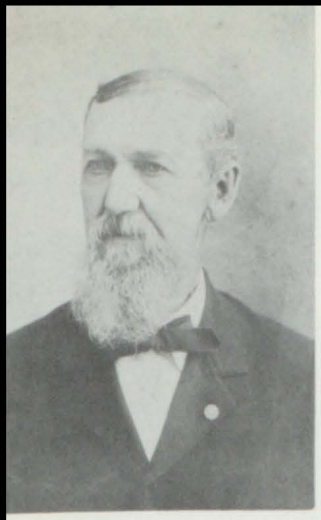


JOHN L. BAIRD



R. G. BAIRD

J. S. LINDLEY



Newt Persinger, was the father of Ed Persinger, who wrote a history of Merrick County in 1895.

PARKER-KYES WEDDING, 1864, WAS FIRST IN COUNTY

John M. Kyes, born in New York state, came to Merrick County in 1862, after spending two years in Colorado, prospecting and driving a stage line. For about two more years after arriving here he drove for the Western Stage Company.

On Christmas day, 1864, he was married to Miss Viola Parker, who also was from New York. This was said to be the first wedding ceremony performed in Merrick County. A short time later Mr. and Mrs. Kyes settled on a farm south of Chapman Station. About 1871 he took up a homestead of 80 acres on Prairie Creek and purchased 300 additional acres. They retired and moved to Central City in 1900. Their descendants have been prominent citizens of Merrick County.

LAFE SIMONSON: son of Simon and Anna Simonson, was born October 1, 1886, on the farm near Worms, and died March 21, 1958, after living a very active lifetime in the vicinity of Worms and Palmer. He was married April 27, 1907, to Miss Milda Dammann, and farmed south of Palmer for thirteen years before moving to Palmer in 1920. He served on the Merrick County Board of Supervisors from 1928 to 1934. He was postmaster at Palmer from 1934 until retiring in 1956. During his term as postmaster, he often went out of his way to serve his patrons, personally delivering mail to the hospital, and to invalids and shut-ins. He was very active in his church, and in all community affairs. He made many friends and few enemies. The Simonsons have one daughter, Myrtle (Mrs. C. F. Keefe) of Stoneleigh, England.

"OUR VIRGIN SOIL--GOD'S GIFT TO MAN ONCE IN AN ETERNITY"

That is the way the late Hon. John G. Boelts referred to our greatest natural resource, our virgin soil. He believed in not allowing it to erode, nor to lose its fertility. Mr. Boelts served in the state legislature in 1909 to 1911, and again was elected to the Legislature in 1930, and to the State Senate in 1932. He died a few years after completing his term in 1934.

Mrs. Melvina C. Hards, who gave Central City its fine library.

Lafe Simonson

Hon. John G. Boelts

Mr. and Mrs. Ed. Parker

Compliments of
COGSWELL TIRE & BATTERY
Central City

Mr. Parker was a colorful personality in the early days of Merrick County.

Mr. Frank Jewell, born in New York, migrated in a wagon to Illinois at 18 years, located in Merrick county in 1860. He was married to Miss Mary Wild, February 27, 1866. (Their picture, below.)

MARY PORTER
Mother of William and Charles Porter and Mrs. Clark Newcomer, was claimed to be the oldest person to have lived in Merrick county. She was born in 1814, and died in 1916.

ANDREW M. TEMPLIN, 1871: born in Ohio, came to Merrick County in 1871. He was the first to prove up on a timber claim, which was the McNeal farm at the southeast edge of Palmer, where Mrs. Alvah Gee now resides. John Campbell was one of the three men who counted the 3000 three-year-old trees, the required number to make the claim legal. A number of old men and young boys had hoed the trees. Mr. Templin owned other land where the village was laid out in 1887. The first car load shipment out of Palmer was a load of popcorn grown by Andrew Templin. Mr. and Mrs. Templin took a leading part in organizing the Church of Christ in Palmer in 1888. Mr. Templin, Mr. Applegate and H. M. Cox were the first trustees of the church.

ALEXANDER S. NICHOLAS, 1872;
Alexander Nicholas and Salena Burge were married July 2, 1858, in Wisconsin and came to this area in 1872. Their children and grandchildren have continued to play a prominent part in the development of this community. Their children were: Isaac, William A., Sarah (Mrs. Ira Giffin), Jemina (Mrs. George Stratton), Alfred, Mary (Mrs. James Peck), Samantha (Mrs. Wesley Devny), Martha (Mrs. Bert Strong), Charles, Joseph, Clara and Myra.

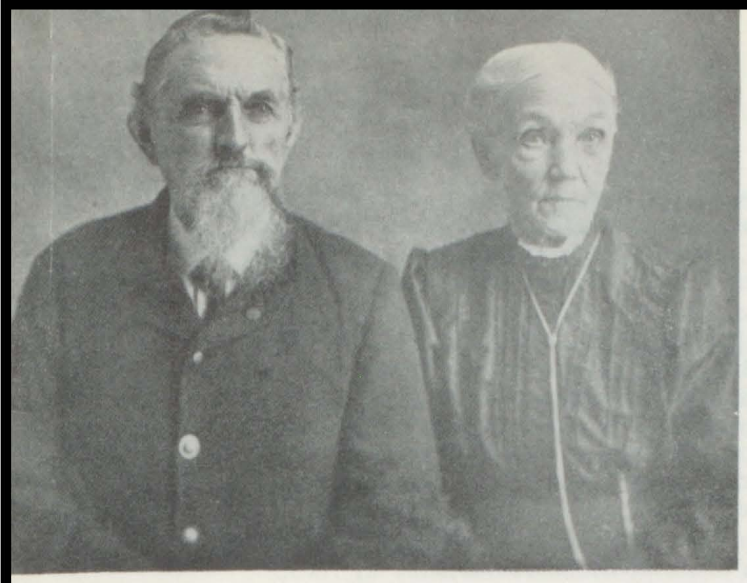
ROBERT ADAMS, 1873: born Dec. 22, 1835, married to Miss Amanda J. Sill of Pennsylvania and Illinois Feb. 7, 1865; homesteaded in 1873 eleven miles northeast of present site of Palmer where he lived until his death in 1897. Eight children: Nora (Mrs. Prutsman), Howard G , Nellie (Mrs. O. E. Burton), Birdie, Eva (Mrs. Frank Wymer), Luella (Mrs. R. W. Wolcott), Alvin, Blanche (Mrs. G. M. Grimes), and Elmer S.

When Mr. and Mrs. Robert Adams came to Nebraska by covered wagon they were accompanied by three brothers: JOHN D. ADAMS, GEORGE ADAMS and WILL ADAMS, the latter settling near Clarks. Children of John Adams were: Harry, Laura (Mrs. Rome Peck), Jesse (Mrs. Marion Cresse). Children of George Adams were: Howard, Clarence, Fred Florence (Mrs. George Charron), Emma (Mrs. Al Gee), Anna (Mrs. Byron Dooley), Will and Charles. Children of Will Adams: Frank, Nettie (Mrs. Art Trail), and Lillian.

W. J. Copeland (left) and his son-in-law, Mr. McKenney, in his early day implement office in Palmer.

Compliments of
ROCKET CAFE & SERVICE STATION

Compliments of
ACE MOTEL
Central City



MR. AND MRS. HENRY C. WELLS

HENRY C. WELLS, 1871: born in New York state, Sept. 9, 1836, married a Miss Cynthia Green in July, 1858; served three years in Civil War, severely wounded in the battle of Fairoaks; moved to Iowa in 1868, homesteaded 6 miles northeast of Lone Tree, Merrick County in 1871, proved up, and then took a timber claim 2 miles north of the present site of Palmer on what is now a Tibbetts farm. Before Palmer was founded, Mr. Wells was postmaster for several years at the Burlingame post office which was located near his timber claim. Their children included four sons: Henry A., George, Fred and Charles.

ANDREW JACKSON HUXFORD, 1871: born in Indiana in 1834; married to Miss Dilemma Burton in 1854; came to Merrick County in 1871 and homesteaded five miles north of Chapman and 9 miles east of Central City; Children: William, Josephine (Mrs. Eugene McDonald), Margaret (Mrs. J. M. Persinger), Rosella, Charles, Anna (Mrs. Robert Morrison), and Dora.

A. TUNKS, 1871: born in Illinois 1847; served in the Civil War one year; married to Miss Bell Martin in 1871 and they came overland to Merrick County, homesteading 7 miles north of Central City. They helped organize school district No. 21. Children: Edith (Mrs. H. C. McGrath), Ethel (Mrs. Clare Betts), and Glen B.

ISAAC S. TYNDALE, 1875: born in Quebec, Canada in 1855; family dates back to the Tyndales in England to the time of William Tyndale in 1500. Came to Central City in 1875, started in a dry goods store in 1879 and continued for many years. Mr. Tyndale served as County Commissioner, was Mayor of Central City, and was appointed postmaster in 1907. He was married to Miss Ada Simpson in 1889.

Compliments of
GLANTZ FARM SERVICE
Farm Service Headquarters
Central City

CLAUS FREDERICK HOLTORF, 1878: born in Germany in 1841, learned the brickmaker's trade; came to America in 1865 to Indiana, where he molded brick for two years, and later in 1867 at Omaha. He was married in 1867 to Miss Catherine Reimers, also a native of Germany. They lived in eastern Iowa until in 1878, they came overland to Merrick County, bringing thirty-seven cattle and five horses. Their homestead was 9 miles northwest of Central City and eleven miles east of Palmer. Children: Adolph, Rosa (Mrs. T. Neuhofel), Minnie (Mrs. George Grage), John H., Marx C., Wilhelm, and Molly (Mrs. George Stuart).

GEORGE M. BURLINGAME: settled here in the late 70's, lived on the present Robeoltmann farm 2 miles north and 1 mile east of Palmer, where he had the first post office in this locality. He also served some years as postmaster in Palmer after the village had been established. He also did some auction work and building. When he built the house in which the Wayne Carlson family now reside it was considered the last word in fancy home building. It first stood on the other edge of the block facing south on Commercial Street. Mr. Burlingame spent his later years in Pasadena, California.

GEORGE M. BURLINGAME

Compliments of
HILDER
Finest in Farm Equipment
Central City

AUSTIN PHELPS, 1875: born 1839, in Illinois; was Civil War Veteran; married Miss Marie Cummins in 1869; homesteaded 10 miles east of Palmer in 1875, and later located at Clarks; children: Carrie (Mrs. Al. Locke), Mary (Mrs. Frank Harland), Edward and Carlyle.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN PHELPS, 1867: born in Wisconsin in 1861; son of Elnathan Phelps, came to Merrick County in 1867 with his parents; His father died in the tornado of 1871. Abraham suffered a broken collar bone, and was knocked senseless. His sister Rose had a head injury. He was married in 1880 to Miss Cora Richfield and in later life they lived near Clarks. Children: Gertrude (Mrs. Paul Cunningham), Alnathan, William and Archie.

JOHN M. MILLER, 1872: born in Ohio in 1838; Civil War Veteran; married in 1862 to Alcinda Inbody; homesteaded in 1872 twelve miles northeast of Central City; children: Lovina (Mrs. James Pitt), Amanda (Mrs. F. H. Brown), Clarinda (Mrs. Dudley Miller), Joseph, James, William, Noah, Louis and Fred.

WILLIAM PHELPS: son of Bela and Henrietta Phelps, born in Illinois in 1851, a half-brother of Joseph Phelps; married in 1872 to Miss Mary Sidebottom; located in the early 1880's two miles west of Central City; children: Lily, Samuel, Claudie, Walter and Effie.

ADDISON J. PARKER: born 1856 in Sarpy County, came to Merrick County with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Jason Parker, bought the first quarter section of land south of the Loup in Nance County, when the Indian Reservation land was thrown open for sale in 1878. In 1901 he returned to Merrick County.

J. G. GAGLE, 1870: Mr. and Mrs. J. G. Gagle left Indiana in 1868 to emigrate to western Kansas. In 1870, they came to Nebraska and homesteaded on a farm 6 1/2 miles north and two miles west of Central City, or about 3 1/2 miles northwest of where the Gagle service station is now located. Of their ten children, two still reside in Merrick County. They are David E. Gagle who has operated the Gagle Service Station for the past twenty-six years; and Hattie (Mrs. Joe Fullington), who lives a mile and a half northwest of Central City.

WILLIAM F. CAMPBELL: brother of John F., born 1837, married to Miss Florissa Curtis, June 1, 1862; was Civil War Veteran; after the war brought his family to this county homesteading 160 acres close to the present location of Palmer on the southeast; Eleven children: Silas, Leander, Sabina (Mrs. Clarence Newlon), Mahala (Mrs. Sherman Cox), Prier, Homer, Orlando, Robert, Walter, Francina (Mrs. Arthur Nicholas), and Ruby.

ABRAM COLBORN, 1883: born in New York state in 1825, married in Canada in 1849, moved to Wisconsin and then to Howard County Nebraska in 1873, located on 80 acres 2 miles south of Palmer in 1883. Eleven children: Alonzo, George, John M., Hiram E., Marcus W., Benjamin F., Abraham L., Mary Catherine, Katie (Mrs. Ernest Atwell), Mabel (Mrs. Wm. Ross), Mrs. Nettie McCartney.

GEORGE COLBORN, son of Abram, homesteaded in the early 1870's on the farm southwest of Palmer where the Harry Weber family lived before they moved into Palmer a few years ago. George established a store and blacksmith shop on his claim.

HIRAM E. COLBORN, 1876: son of Abram, born Dec. 11, 1855, in Sauk County, Wis., homesteaded about 3 1/2 miles south of present site of Palmer in 1876; married in 1886 to Miss Mary Goodrich whose family came to Merrick County in 1872; Seven children: Benny, Mary Gertrude (Mrs. Lowell Smith), Lysle, Etoile (Mrs. Alvah Gee), Avery, Katie (Mrs. Elmer Izer), and Jessie (Mrs. Mel Mordaunt).

JOHN M. COLBORN, 1874: son of Abram Colborn, born 1853, in Canada, homesteaded in 1874, 2 1/2 miles south of Palmer, south of the present Gus Schlueter farm; married in 1880 to Miss Belle Jolls. Six children: Jessie (Mrs W. E. Green), Lena, Edith (Mrs. H. E. Trout), Lee Jolls, Mark S., and Susie.

CLAUS FREDERICK HOLTORF, 1878: Born in 1841, at Holstein, Germany, came to Merrick County in 1878, homesteading about 6 miles north of Archer. Children: Adolph, Frederick, Rosa G. (Mrs. T. Neuhofel), Minnie F. (Mrs. George Grage), John H., Marx C., Wilhelm C., and Molly.

LUTELLUS L. FRAZER, 1878: born in Pennsylvania 1836; Civil War Veteran, came to Merrick County in 1878, and homesteaded 3 1/2 miles southeast of Archer. Children: Howard M., Jessie M. (Mrs. C. K. Sinsel), John N., and Arthur L.

JEFFERSON D. VAN PELT, 1879: born 1849 in Ohio; homesteaded 160 acres in the northwest corner on Midland precinct about 5 miles northwest of Archer and 5 miles east of

Palmer; children: Mayo, Milo, Sophia (Mrs. A. Nitzel), John B., Iona (Mrs. William Trebilcock), and Jessie D.

MILTON A. RAWLINGS, 1887: born at Bloomfield, Iowa, 1853; conducted a grocery and drug business at Mount Vernon, Mo., before coming to Archer in 1887. He operated a hardware store for two years, and then bought a farm northwest of Archer, Children: J. Oren and Samuel.

PAUL FRAUEN, 1868: born in Germany in 1847; in 1868 homesteaded 80 acres near the Lockwood Station about 7 miles southwest of Chapman in the southwest corner of the county; married in 1876 to Catherine Paustin, who was also a native of Germany; children: Cecelia (Mrs. Max Cornelius), Otto, Henry, John J., and Anna (Mrs. Chris Sass).

WILLIAM B. SHOEMAKER, 1871: born in Keokuk County, Iowa, in 1850; came to Merrick County in 1871, and later homesteaded on a farm four miles southwest of Chapman; children: Evelyn, Beatrice (Mrs. Frank Ritter), Inez, William N., George and Sarah.

CLARK NEWCOMER, 1871: born in Pennsylvania in 1835; came to Nebraska in 1871 and later homesteaded 160 acres at the northwest edge of the present town of Central City. Mrs. Newcomer died in 1879, and he was married in 1886 to Mrs. Elvira J. Porter Nash

WILLIAM F. SINSEL, 1875: born 1841, in West Virginia; married in 1866; came to Nebraska in 1875, and homesteaded about 1 1/2 miles south of present location of Archer; children: Charles J., Guy R., Thayer A., and Carl W. who married Jessie who later became County Treasurer.

ISAAC PLACE, 1873: born in Illinois in 1842; served in the army during the Civil War; came to Nebraska in 1873 and took up a timber claim two miles north of Palmer, where his grandson, John D. Place and family now reside. Children of Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Place were: Franklin who died young, John, Melissa E., and Janis (Mrs. J. R. Burke).

JOHN A. MILLER, 1873: born in Germany in 1842; came to America with his parents in 1856, and settled first in Wisconsin; served in the Civil War; married in 1868 to Miss Albertina Hoffman; came to Merrick County in 1873, and homesteaded about 8 miles southeast of Palmer on the farm now owned by his son John. Mr. and Mrs. John A. Miller had 13 children: Amelia (Mrs. John Scheibe), Julius, Elizabeth (Mrs. Wm. Otte), Susie (Mrs. Henry Thede), Julia (Mrs. Herman Ruphoff), Esther (Mrs. Albert Peters), Ferdinand, Mollie (Mrs. Oscar Ernst), August, Emma (Mrs. Wm. Krause), John, Sarah (Mrs. John Beyers), and Clara (Mrs. Wm. Retzlaff).

THE DINSDALE FAMILY did not come to Merrick County until 1908, but they settled across the river in Nance County in 1886. Mr. and Mrs. George Dinsdale (Sr.) were natives of Yorkshire, England, came to America in 1882 and farmed in Douglas County Nebraska before coming to Nance County, where they purchased farm land. In 1908, Mr. Dinsdale sold his stock interests in Nance County and moved to Palmer, where he built a fine home and engaged in the elevator business.

In 1909 while engaged in stacking hay Mr. Dinsdale was thrown and fatally injured. His sons, later with the help of his grandsons, have continued and expanded the business into one of the largest farming, grain, and cattle feeding operations in the county.

WARREN BURKMAN, 1879: son of Elias and Amelia B. Burkman was born at Medina, Ohio, Aug. 1, 1847; married to Elma Folsom of Wisconsin in 1867; settled on a farm 4 miles northeast of Palmer in 1879. They had five children: Genevieve (Mrs. David Baird), Frank, who raised eight daughters and one son, Bert, Clifford, Pearl (Mrs. Charlie Yatmon).

JOHN F. CAMPBELL, 1874: born in Porter County, Ind., Apr. 2, 1840; son of Samuel and Elizabeth Campbell; married Feb. 22, 1865, to Matilda Penrose of Knox County, Ohio; homesteaded 80 acres 1 1/2 miles south of Palmer in 1874 and bought 160 acres adjoining. Nine children: Elmer, Etta (Mrs. Wm. Rice), Nancy (Mrs. P. Petersen), Mary (Mrs. John Coolridge), Clara (Mrs. James Kyle), Andrew, Laura (Mrs. Edward Terry), Myrtle and Delbert.

SIMONSON: Two related branches of the Simonson family came from Norway in the early days and settled in Worms Community. Onon Simonson, born in 1848, came across the water to Illinois in 1866, married Miss Berte Egeland in 1870, and they homesteaded in Sec. 20, T. 13, R. 8, about a mile south of where Worms now is, in 1873. They had two children, Simon and Anne. Simon married Miss Selma Wagner in 1895, and their

children are Berte, Ella, Oscar, Onon and Norman.

Another Simon Simonson, born in 1851, arrived in Grand Island from Norway in 1880, and in 1881 moved to his homestead north of Worms. Children in his family: Simon K., John, Anna, Dorothy (Mrs. Ed. Seim), Lafe Andrew, Onen, Thorval, and Emma (Mrs. August Helzer).

DAVID Y. CLARK, 1872: born in New York state in 1841; married to Lucy A. Perkins in 1862; in 1872 he homesteaded five miles southwest of Central City. Children: Charles, Grace, Kate (Mrs. John Desch), Guy, Frank, and George. Two of their sons, Guy and George became well known doctors.

GEORGE A. CLARK, 1871: born 1840 in New York state; Civil War Veteran; Married in 1861 to Miss Florence A. Stickler in Illinois; homesteaded in 1871 on Silver Creek two miles west of the present Gambles service station. Two children were born: Carroll E. and Lela (Mrs. G. A. Rose). Two brothers, Oliver and William M. Clark, also came to Merrick County.

WILLIAM M. CLARK, 1871: born 1847 in Pennsylvania; homesteaded in 1872 six miles northeast of Archer and six miles northwest of Central City; married in 1875 to Miss Emily Bovee; children: Minnie (Mrs. George Drye), Josephine (Mrs. John Dillon), Oscar, Florence, Lela and Estella.

JOSEPH B. WHITE, 1871: born in New York state 1837; Civil War Veteran; married to Miss Laura Ann O'Neill in 1865 in Waterloo, Iowa; arrived at Lone Tree in April, 1871. He was a mason and builder. Children: Margaret (Mrs. Hugh Miller), Emeline (Mrs. John Baird), Elizabeth (Mrs. David Jackson), Laura (Mrs. Sid Baird), Hattie (Mrs. Bert Hughes), Rose (Mrs. James Danks), Josie (Mrs. Albert Miller), Arthur, Daisy (Mrs. David Green).

EUGENE HILTON, 1859: born in Maine 1844; came to Iowa with parents in 1857; in 1859, Eugene came to Lone Tree with his mother, Mrs. John Hilton, and two sisters, Fannie and Annie, and they took charge of the Lone Tree stage coach station. The Hilton ranch was one mile east of Lone Tree station. Eugene carried mail from Eagle Island to Wood River one year, homesteaded more land in 1868, and was married to Miss Helen Groves in 1869. Children: John, Minnie (Mrs. Frank Moore), Guy, Raymond, Fay and Verne.

THOMAS M. WILLEMAN, 1872: born in Ohio 1874; came to Nebraska in 1872 and homesteaded eight miles northwest of Central City; married to Miss Alice McIntosh in Ohio in 1874, returning to the homestead in Merrick County. Children: Roy, Myley (Mrs. Joseph Emmert), Lloyd, Verde, Sidney and Ernest. Mr. Willeman was Civil War Veteran.

Archer

In 1886, Cyrus D. Chapman, who homesteaded the NW 1/4 of section 28-14-7, wrote to the Burlington officials urging the feasibility of a railroad line out in the direction of his farm. Mr. Chapman, a dynamic character, furnished the spark which set things rolling. The following year surveyors were on the grounds marking out the line and determining the sites for towns along the way. Mr. Chapman gave a full month of his time helping the men and no doubt influencing a decision in favor of some of his land as a site for the first town out of Central City. On May 25, 1887, the Lincoln Land Company, cooperating apparently with the Burlington, purchased from E. H. Whickam and Mary Chapman (wife of C. N.) the land now occupied by the village of Archer.

Some heat was engendered in naming the new town. Mr. Whickam wanted it to bear his name and since there already was one Chapman in the county, Mr. Chapman was determined to call it Cyrus. A compromise was reached by naming it for Mr. Archer, a man prominent at that time in B. & M. circles. Cyrus D. Chapman, who had so much to do with the founding of Archer, was a tall, forcefully built man and happiest when in the role of leader. It is fairly safe to say that except for C. D. Chapman there would be no Archer and the town, whatever its name, would be differently located.

That fall, E. Hansen, who was operating a country store at Adams Center, two-miles southwest of the proposed town, moved his building to a site where it still stands although not occupied at the present time. Later Mr. Hansen, engaged in partnership with J. B. Templin, operated a creamery as well as his mercantile business. The old Hansen store, now deserted, has housed numerous businesses including E. Hansen, Hansen and Templin, Riggs and Wegner, Graham and Mendenhall, Warren Riggs, and P. C. Woodward.

In the spring of 1888, Mr. Chapman erected a store building, 16x32 feet, just across the street north from Mr. Hansen's store. He also, in partnership with M. H. Rawlings, established a lumber yard at the rear of his store. The Chapman store was burned and then replaced with a larger building. It was occupied later by the following merchants: H. Gurney, Schroeder and Wagner, Wegner and Bonness, Bonness and Dipple, Paul Bonness and at present by Bonness Brothers (Harvey and Elmer). The Bonness family has been in the store since 1900.

The Central Grain Company built the first elevator, which after passing through many different ownerships, was removed to give way for the present structure owned for many years by T. B. Hord Company and now by Farmers Co-op Grain and Coal Co.

In 1890, came C. E. Barnett, a young physician, asking for a place to office. Later came Dr. Benton, Adams, Paxton, Pitts, Briggs and Mitz.

The first and only hotel was kept by Chris and Elizabeth Frank. For a while a drug store was operated by Minor Whaley. Starting with Chris Hostetter our bankers have been Joe Hayes, Wm. O'Connor, George Lehr, W. P. Hansen and W. W. McBride. There have been nine postmasters as follows: A. Talkington, George Kull, H. Gurney, Joe Cagel, W. Riggs, P. C. Woodward and W. P. Hansen. The first rural mail carrier was Deacon Gardner, followed by Buren Wells. At an early date, S. D. Ayers established lumber and coal yards which were operated successively by R. Brannan, George Ayers and George Eckhoff, who was also part owner.

Burlington agents included the following: A. Talkington, J. Kamerer, Max Burns, L. K. James, Joe Cogil, D. Brandt, Speed Smith, Ed Wiser, F. Yates and T. Shirley.

Archer came into prominence as a shipping center in the early days surpassing all other towns in the county in the output of hay. A great deal of grain and an annual shipment of 100 cars of livestock gave a great deal of business to the village of Archer. In 1895, Archer had a population of 125. Since its origin in 1887, the town has attracted many business enterprises which presently have moved on in quest of greener pastures. Other present day businesses besides those mentioned before are Miller's Archer Oil Co., C. Banish Garage, Locker Plant and Tschudy and Ita Implement and Repair Shop.

Early Archer Street Scenes

GUESS WHO?

Compliments
of
BUCKEYE
MFG. &
SALES CO.
Central
City

Compliments
of
HESTEDS
STORES
Central
City,
Nebraska

EAST SIDE OF MAIN STREET

FLOOD SCENE--1905

Compliments
of
ALMA
OIL CO.

Compliments
of
LaFAYETTE
BEAUTY
SALON

ARCHER M. E. CHURCH

FLOOD 1905

JULIUS ZAMZOW AND HIS BLACKSMITH SHOP

STANDING: (Left to Right) Ella Wegner Riggs, Hulda Zamzow Schmaltz, William Martin, Charles Wolf. SEATED: George Lehr and Leon McKendry.

Other Archer Scenes

MENTZER BURRO

DEACON GARDNER CHILDREN

TRAFFIC JAM

MRS. VERN RIGGS AND GRAMPA SUCK

INSIDE THE HANSEN STORE

Compliments of
BISHOP HARDWARE CO.
Merrick County's Oldest

Central City

A building erected by the Western Stage Company in 1858, was the first which was raised on the soil of the present Merrick County. It was the beginning of "Lone Tree Station." Up to 1869, however, "Lone Tree Station" was not the official town of the early settlers.

The first post office was at Shoemaker's point near Chapman. In 1864, this was abandoned for one established at Brewer's ranch. In 1869, this Post Office was moved to "Lone Tree Station" which was situated on the present site of Central City with Ed. Parker as postmaster. This marked the real beginning of Lone Tree.

The first building in Lone Tree aside from the depot was erected by J. H. Berryman in the fall of 1868. In this combined store and residence was held the first session of district court, in charge of Judge Crounce.

The next business house was erected by Traver and May.

The little town grew and by 1875, when the name was changed to Central City, there was a population of between 1000 and 1200. Through the years, the town continued to grow, leading all other Merrick County towns in size. The growth was slow until about 1883, when there was a building boom that saw business and population grow rapidly.

Merrick County's first newspaper appeared at Lone Tree on March 21, 1872, and was called the "Merrick County News" and edited by Henry Kelsey.

In this first Merrick County newspaper were the following advertisements:

John Foulks	Boot and Shoe Maker
Nelson Barnes	Contractor and Builder
W. A. Porter and Son	Wagon Makers
Jesse Turner	Attorney-At-Law
M. L. Wright	"Headquarters Saloon"
H. N. Bryant	Bryant's Hotel
Sparks and Ewing	Attorneys-At-Law
Wm. McEndree	General Merchandise
J. B. Adams	Land Agent
Baker and Root	Druggists
Moore and May	Farm Implements
H. W. Pearsons	General Merchandise
Traver and May	Lumber Yard
J. H. Berryman and Bro.	General Merchandise

Among the local items it was reported that "some fifty-families have arrived during the week and located on their homesteads, and that W. A. Comstock shipped several carloads of grain westward during the week, and 'with good results'."

Market quotations at Omaha in 1872 included: Flour, per sack $4.00 to $5.00; Wheat 75¢ to $1.10 per bu.; Corn 21¢ to 27¢; Butter per lb. 20¢ to 22¢; Potatoes, per bu. 30¢.

Less than a year after the establishment of the News, political complications (which was a usual cause in those days) produced another newspaper, the "Lone Tree Sentinel." Col. W. H. Webster and George A. Percival were the editors. The Sentinel was started as a "railroad paper," to advocate the Midland Pacific Railroad bonds, to which the News was opposed. In April, 1874, the Merrick County News, under new management, was changed to the Lone Tree Courier. After a number of changes in publishers the Courier was discontinued in 1894.

Other early newspapers were the Merrick County Item in 1880 and discontinued in 1881. In 1882 the Central City Nonpareil made its appearance, and in 1888 the Merrick County Republican came into existence, published by W. P. Watson, until in 1893, it was changed to the Central City Democrat, with Geo Wells as editor. In 1891, the Independent Press, backing the Populist cause, was started and continued for a number of years.

Central City in 1958 is a busy, florishing town of some 2400 people. Nestled in the midst of the rich Platte Valley, it looks forward eagerly to the next 100 years.

Central City Through The Years

Dedicating Lone Tree Monument Central City, Neb.

Oldest Business Building, razed in 1957

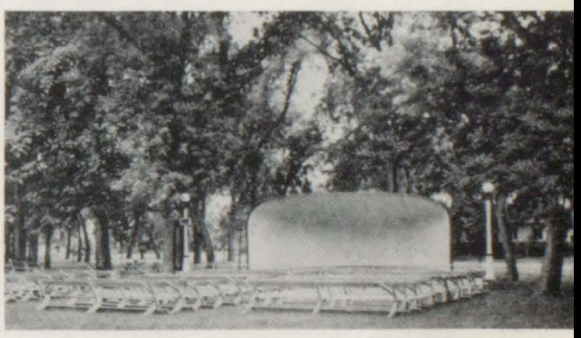
The New Masonic Hall

CENTRAL CITY'S
OLDEST BUSINESS BUILDING
"The J. H. Berryman Building"

Lone Tree Lodge No. 36 A. F. & A. M. rented the south half of the upstairs of this building in 1871 and held their meetings there until 1882 when they rented the whole upstairs. They purchased the building in 1929 and continued to meet there until the spring of 1957 when the building was razed and the new Masonic Temple was erected on the site. Since 1871 Lone Tree Lodge has known no other home.

Following is a list of the original and present Master and Wardens:

Original	Present
Worshipful Master	
Leland O. Doolittle	T. Leo Stines
Senior Warden	
David Thomas	C. Agnar Anderson
Junior Warden	
Joseph B. Adams	Floyd M. Gorgen


Band Shell in North Park, Central City

Compliments of
LARSEN CHEVROLET CO.
Central City and Fullerton

Compliments of
NIELSEN RADIO-TV
Central City

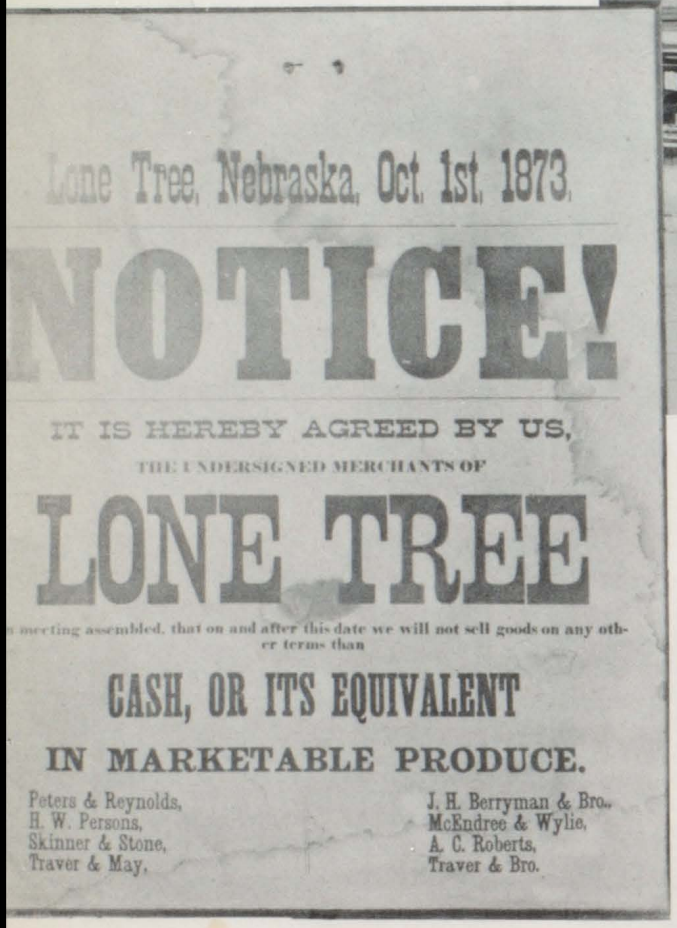
ABOVE: Nine horse power. BELOW: First Rural fire truck in America.

Here and There Across the Century

Compliments of ROSS-McILNAY
Central City

Compliments of
ZLOMKE FURNITURE COMPANY

HAY BURNER MOTEL 1909



Lone Tree, Nebraska, Oct. 1st, 1873.

NOTICE!

IT IS HEREBY AGREED BY US,

THE UNDERSIGNED MERCHANTS OF

LONE TREE

a meeting assembled, that on and after this date we will not sell goods on any other terms than

CASH, OR ITS EQUIVALENT

IN MARKETABLE PRODUCE.

Peters & Reynolds,
H. W. Persons,
Skinner & Stone,
Traver & May,
J. H. Berryman & Bro.,
McEndree & Wylie,
A. C. Roberts,
Traver & Bro.

1958 - ECONOMICS HAVE CHANGED

The Hord Home Ranch

(about 1900)

MR. AND MRS. T. B. HORD
With Team and Buggy at Right

T. B. Hord was born in 1850, at Marion Ohio. Moving from there to Cheyenne Wyoming in 1880 and then to Central City in 1886. His arrival marked the beginning of a great business and industrial development in this locality. Beginning in the cattle and sheep feeding business, the Hord enterprises grew and flourished until all Nebraska was familiar with the name. Grain elevators, lumber yards, feed and farm supply houses became a part of the vast holdings. At one time, the annual output of finished livestock from the Hord lots was 10,000 cattle, 10,000 sheep and 7,000 hogs.

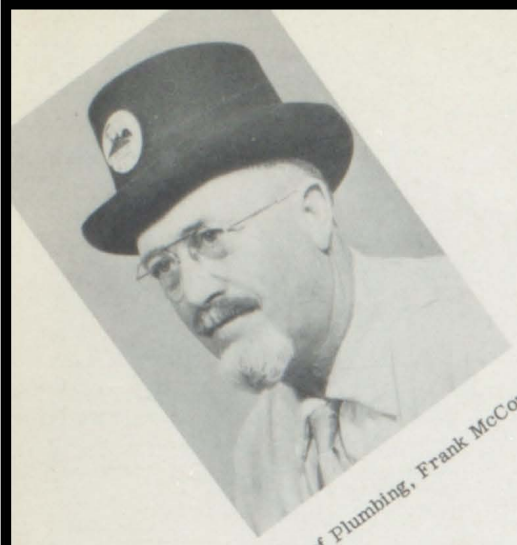
T. B. Hord and his descendants have, through the years, shared their success with the community which became their home. Amongst their visible contributions to Central City and community are, the home site of the Presbyterian Manse, **Hord Hall** at Nebraska Central College and Hord Memorial Hospital.

Compliments of
SAMPSON & ARMATYS
Central City

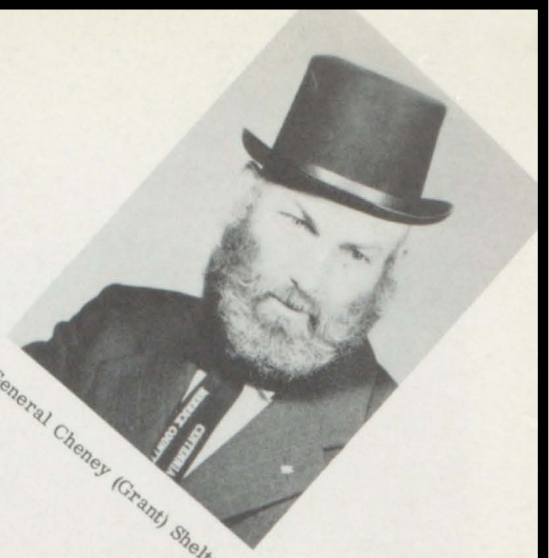
Compliments of
REDMAN'S SHOES
Central City

Compliments of
J. M. McDONALD CO.
Central City

Central City, 1958

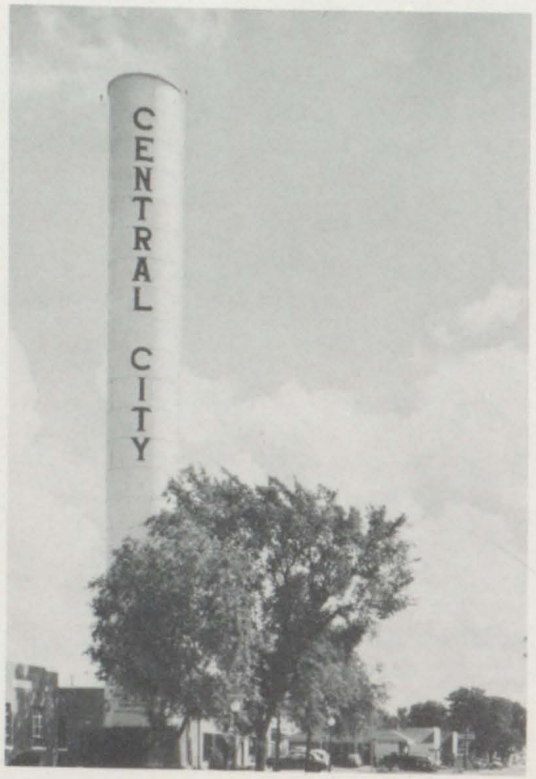


Dr. of Plumbing, Frank McConnell



General Cheney (Grant) Shelton

Compliments of
HORD & SON
Central City



Compliments of
HAITH MOTOR
Central City

Compliments of
NED CARLSON
Central City

Compliments of
CENTRAL CITY
REPUBLICAN-NONPAREIL

Central City Looking West

Central City Looking East

Silver Creek

Silver Creek was platted by the Union Pacific in November, 1866. The depot and section house were the first buildings. Next was the home of Mr. and Mrs. B. F. Hobert, parents of Paul Hobert who is the present station agent. The Hobert home stood where the present home of Mr. and Mrs. George White now live. The building was later used as a saloon, a store, and a schoolhouse. It is still in use as a cob house on the Alex McQueen farm. The depot of 1866 was sold and remodeled as a barn. The new depot was erected in 1906.

In September of 1870, Byrus Lee built the Lee Hotel, first semi-public building in the village. The earliest settlers in the community included the Shaw brothers; Mr. Lathrop on a ranch two miles south of town; Ed Howland, locating 1 1/4 miles north of town; Lawson Harris, 2 1/2 miles northwest of town. Fred and Ed Terry, who had married two sisters from Illinois, settled one mile north of Silver Creek and their descendants have played a prominent part in the life of the community. Pearl Simmons and Lynn Simmons, well known over the county are grandchildren of Ed. Terry. Other names among the early settlers are: Chas. Powers, Martin Kargas, Hubert Polman, and the names of Maurer, Dittmer, Shepherd, Antrim, and many others.

Silver Creek derived its name from a creek south of town. Sixty years ago, the town was visited by floods quite frequently, damaging crops greatly. On one occasion, it flooded so early in the spring that it froze hard enough for one to start from home and skate for miles. Many experiences such as floating through streets in boats and rafts occurred. One family floated away in a wagon box.

In 1870, the song birds were mainly the meadow lark and black bird. Prairie chicken and wild game furnished meat for the pioneer. Wood was scarce and the inhabitants often went eleven miles for fuel Many of the Silver Creek settlers came from fruit country and were soon making use of wild elderberries, common sorrel, wild grapes, plums, and sand cherries.

Silver Creek's first newspaper was the "Silver Creek Times." It was first published Dec. 24, 1887, by Chas. H. Urwin. It was a seven column folio. The paper was purchased by Chas. Wooster four years later and in 1900, it changed hands again and was edited by Dyo F. Davis. In 1901, it was issued by W. M. Hult, but was unsuccessful and the "Times" expired. October 3, 1903, the present Silver Creek paper, the "Silver Creek Sand," was created under Dyo F. Davis and Son, so named because someone said it took "grit" to publish a paper in Silver Creek. Later, the son, Dyo, took over and continued until 1950, when he sold to John F. Carter.

The people suffered the usual hardships of early pioneers. The Easter storm of 1888 did little damage due to the townsmen's providing shelter for teachers and pupils. In 1874, the grasshopper raid left barren fields and in 1894, hot winds destroyed the crops.

The first school was a private school built in 1870, taught by Miss Clamina Goodrich. It was held in the Cyrus Lee Hotel. Teachers were paid each quarter by collection. A district school was organized in 1871. Several buildings were used for schoolhouses. The Flyn and Mimis houses were two of the first school buildings. The new building was a two story, four room structure built in 1886. It was later sold to C. R. Metzer and used in building a house for Malin which later burned. The new brick building was built in 1910. The north ward school began in a building on Chas. Terry's on Section 18. "Home Girls," most of them children of Pioneers, have played an important part in the education of Silver Creek. The first annual commencement was held June 2, 1892, in the Congregational Church.

The Silver Creek Township Library was organized in 1917, through the effort of Chas. Wooster. The new building was built in 1934.

In 1865, the Stage Route Post Office, then called Silver Glen, was established two miles east of Silver Creek. In 1869, this was abandoned and mail was cared for at the depot. On April 4, 1877, Silver Glen passes into nonentity and C. H. Lee was issued a commission to be Postmaster of Silver Creek.

The old water mill was built in 1878, on the George Tivey farm. The Silver Creek Roller Mill was established in 1893. Some of the old construction is still standing. The son of the owner of the mill was fatally injured in the mill. The hub of an old pulley wheel had been fastened on the end of the main drive shaft as a cap to prevent end-play. A few broken spokes had not been removed from the old pulley. These spokes caught in the boy's coat and whirled him over and over before the power could be shut off. (Our informant was unable to recall the names of the men operating this mill.)

The first Platte River bridge was built in 1877 at a cost of $10,000. At this time, people had to go to Duncan and then to Osceola. Between seven and six thousand people gathered in Silver Creek on Aug. 13, 1925, to observe the dedication of the present bridge. The cost was $100,000. The state paid one half and Merrick and Polk counties each paid for one fourth of the new bridge.

Early settlers had little to fear from Indians but dishonesty and begging caused discomfort. In 1873, the Pawnee passed between Silver Creek and Geona. Many Indian relics have been found in the sand hills near Silver Creek.

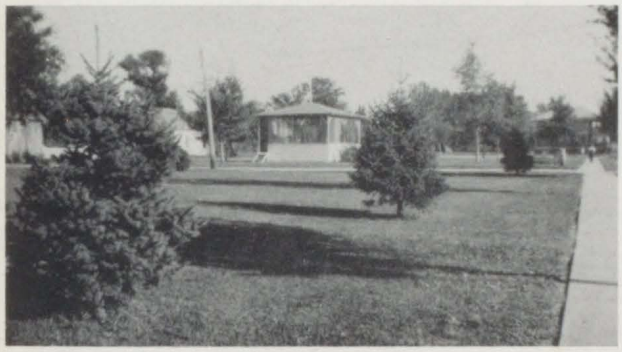
Darius Towslee was chairman of first village board of Silver Creek. C. H. Urwin was the first editor. The first marriage in this township was Wm. Jarman and Bridget McDermit in the Episcopal Rector's study, Dec. 26, 1870. The first marriage in the Church was 1871. The first religious services were held in a log cabin in 1867, by Henry Shaw and Samuel Goodale. The St. Stephens Episcopal Church was the first church in Merrick Co. The first death was in 1871, Ann Fuhrman, and was laid to rest in the yard of the St. Stephens Church. The first railroad was the Union Pacific and was built through Silver Creek in 1866.

Silver Creek is one of the three second size towns in the county. It is located in a very fertile area, has excellent schools, church, and business facilities, including a newly established irrigation supply company. The Kula Department Store ranks with the best in the country. It has a fine public library and through the years, has had very good bands.

Silver Creek was originally named Silver Glen and located about two miles west of the present town of Silver Creek. Later, it was moved to the present site and the name changed.

Around Town In Silver Creek

Compliments of CENTRAL CITY FLORISTS



City Park

High School and Gymnasium

Township Library

Compliments of BOB STUART, Farmer

Indian Massacre of 1873

The summer of 1873, the sorrow stricken Pawnees passed across the county from Silver Creek to Genoa on their return from their last buffalo hunt. Bitter was the wailing and moaning of those suffering from the loss of children, wives, husbands, brothers and sisters. Their children were told that more than 150 Pawnee men, women, and children had been forced to give up their lives to the Sioux enemies.

The following was taken from W. H. Smith's store as related by an old scout, J. W. Williamson, who was trail agent at that time for the Genoa Agency.

"On the second day of July, 1873, the Pawnees to the number of 700 left Genoa for the hunting grounds. Of this number 530 were men.

We started on our journey by crossing the Loup River two and one-half miles south of the agency and camped on Prairie Creek about 5 miles from where Silver Creek now stands. From there were followed the Platte up as far as Grand Island, thence to Plum Creek and to the Republican River.

Before we reached the Beaver, signs indicated that buffalo had been there recently. No sooner than a halt had been made than the scouts came riding in and reported that a herd of 300 or 400 buffalo were feeding on the south slope of the divide between Beaver and Prairie Dog Creeks. So expert were the Pawnees in killing buffalo that not one animal escaped death out of the several herds attacked. That night there was a great feast in the camp.

August 5th we broke camp and started north up the divide between Republican and Frenchman Rivers. A few minutes later a buffalo scout signaled that buffalo had been sighted in the distance and Sky Chief rode out to engage the hunt. I never saw him again.

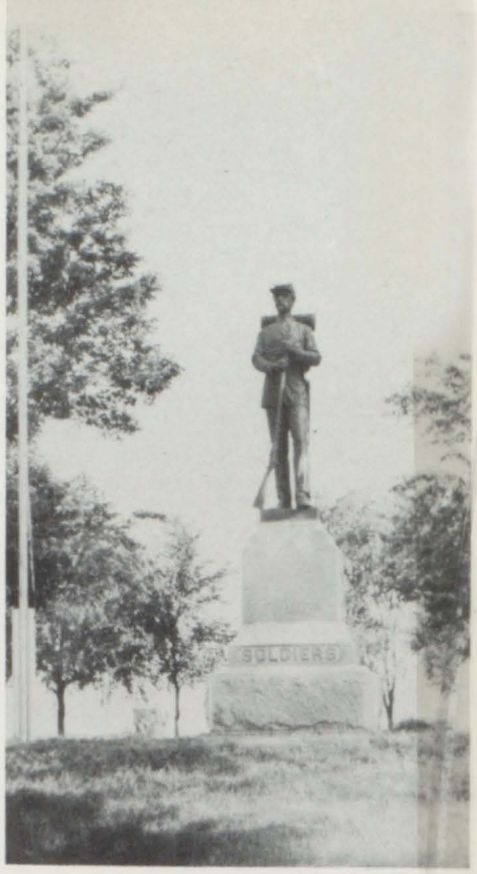
We had not proceeded more than a mile when I noticed a commotion at the head of the procession which had suddenly stopped and I was told that the Sioux were coming. We were about 100 yards from the head of the canyon that extended down to the river. Orders were shouted down for the squaws and pack ponies to take refuge in the canyon, that extended down to the river. It was suggested we fall back down the canyon, Chief Terra Recekone was in favor but Fighting Bear rebelled. We took his suggestion and made a stand on the grounds where we were. As the Sioux came over the hill, it was apparent that the Sioux outnumbered the fighting men of the Pawnees four to one. There were 1200 to 1500 Sioux warriors. The Pawnees put up a great fight but odds were against them. The Pawnee's chief gave orders to retreat.

As the Pawnees reached the river and crossed to the opposite bank, the Sioux cut off 700 ponies and had started down the stream to cross at another point to pursue the Pawnees when they suddenly stopped. Looking across the river, I noticed the flag bearer of the United States Cavalry troop. The Sioux beat a hasty retreat.

We camped that night on the banks of Red Willow Creek. There was nothing to eat. All our supplies had been left on the battlefield. I wired Barclay White, superintendent of Northwestern Indian Agencies, and he made arrangements with the Union Pacific to provide box cars for bringing the Pawnees to Silver Creek. They walked across the country to Genoa, a sorrowful return from the last buffalo hunt in a country that had been their home for many years."

Compliments of
HESTED STORE,

H. H. RILEY AGENCY
Central City



Memorial Monument at
Silver Creek

MEMORIAL MONUMENT
AT SILVER CREEK

Engraved on the beautiful memorial statue to service men erected in the Silver Creek Cemetery are the names of veterans of four wars, whose graves are in the cemetery.

BLACK HAWK WAR, 1832:
McCormick

MEXICAN WAR, 1848:
Matthias Ruff

SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR, 1898
C. W. Peterson
Arthur Hunt
E. A. Wilson

CIVIL WAR, 1861-1865:
W. E. Mason
D. J. Towslee
H. Haywood
J. D. Williams
T. P. Williams
James A. Brown
A. C. Smith
W. V. Derimer
U. C. Whiteaker
L. H. Turk
J. H. Conkling
H. Davis
J. E. Howland (sailor)
T. M. Pethick
Solomon Shepherd
James Stingley
Park Kinney
George W. Clutter
E. Mustard

Palmer

Organized in 1887

Palmer, like Archer, is one of the "young" towns of the county, being started in 1887, when the railroad was built from Central City to the northwest. By that time the area around Palmer was fairly well settled. There were rural schools and it had been served by post offices. One post office named Burlingame, had been on the George Burlingame farm northeast of Palmer. Another called Vickie, was said to have been located in a small building in the southeast part of the present town of Palmer, east across the road from the ball park.

When the railroad was first built it was called the Lincoln and Black Hills road. It was visioned then that Palmer would be the junction of two important lines running to the Black Hills and the great Northwest. Trains started running over the St. Paul branch in October 1887.

It was recorded at the time that several switch tracks, 2000 feet long, and a round house 1500 feet in circumference and with forty engine stalls were being built at Palmer. Big coal sheds, a depot, and "one of the largest water tanks west of the Mississippi river" were being built.

For the townsite, the railroad company bought 480 acres from W. Templin, Robert Lambert and Mrs. Samuel Lambert. The town was named in honor of Major H. E. Palmer of Plattsmouth, a Civil War Veteran and a high officer in the G. A. R.

The boom feeling and enthusiasm ran high in the community, as was reflected in the writings of the first editor and other residents. The following is quoted from the first issue of the PALMER SUN, dated October 7, 1887:

"On no published map of Nebraska is the name and location of our town printed. A half month ago it was unsurveyed. In the spring part of the town was planted to corn.

"The town is now filling up with enterprising and far seeing men. . . .The country back of the town is the richest in the county. The Elk and Loup Valleys. . .have never failed to bring forth splendid crops. Of railroad facilities, too much cannot be said. . .bright days in the future are assured.

"The townsite could not have been better chosen.

It commands a beautiful view of the valleys filled with well tilled farms, good farm houses, and fine groves. We extend a welcome to all newcomers. There is a place here for the industrious, the enterprising, and the man of means."

Was the writer exaggerating? Or was he just showing a wise appreciation of surroundings?

The first business building was built by Joe A. Hayes of Hayes Bros. It was completed in September, 1887. Other buildings must have mushroomed almost overnight, for in the newspaper published on October 7, 1887, about ten local business places were advertised.

In seven years, 1895, Palmer had a population of 200. It reached its peak in about 1920 with nearly 600 residents.

Though the problems of the small town have been difficult, since the coming of the automobile, the spirit of Palmer has remained much the same as expressed in 1887. The results are seen in the progress of its schools and churches, and the large number of solid and enterprising business enterprises here at the present time.

PALMER IN THE HORSE AND BUGGY DAYS
Arrow points to the first brick building built by Joe Hayes in the winter of 1887-1888. Still in good condition, it is the only original business still in town. It houses the east half of Palmer Furniture Store.

This Page Sponsored By
STATE BANK
Palmer

HOW ONE MAN "DISCOVERED" GAGE VALLEY

Gage Valley is that rich farming area south and southwest of Palmer. The grandparents of Lee Nicholas, Mr. and Mrs. Alexander S. Nicholas, and family, homesteaded in 1873 on the quarter section one mile southwest of what is now Palmer, on the farm that has been known as the Fitzpatrick place and is now occupied by the Alfred Meyer family.

In the spring of 1872, the family had come from LaFayette County, Wisconsin, to Howard County, Nebraska, where Mr. Nicholas pre-empted some land near St. Paul, south of the Loup River. As the nearest grist mill was at Lone Tree, they would haul their grain for flour on a trail down the Loup River Valley about fifteen miles then turn southward through the Fairview territory to Lone Tree. This was a long round-about way, so one time A. S. Nicholas decided to strike out across country directly toward Lone Tree. After crossing some sand hills he came upon the gently-rolling land which was later named Gage Valley. He decided to homestead there and entered his application in the fall of 1873.

While the Nicholas family still lived in Howard County, their oldest son, Isaac, age about 12 years, and a neighbor boy, being saturated with the spirit of pioneer adventure, decided they wanted to go to South America. So without telling their folks, they started out afoot.

Later in the day the parents learned of the boys' departure. Mr. Nicholas started after them on horseback. Late that night he caught up with the boys at the Gus Coolidge home northwest of Lone Tree. They all stayed at the Coolidge home until early the next morning, when Mr. Nicholas and the boys started the long journey back home. One of the boys was without shoes, so he was allowed to ride back of Mr. Nicholas' saddle, while the boy with shoes trudged along beside the horse.

There was a happy sequence to this adventure. In the Gus Coolidge home where the boys had been "guests" there was a nice little daughter named Cora. She later became Mrs. Isaac Nicholas. Children from this union include Mrs. Orlando Campbell and the late Arthur, Guy and Glen Nicholas.

Mr. and Mrs. A. S. at their home in Palmer after retiring from farm.

FIRST BURIAL IN ROSE HILL CEMETERY

Land was donated and dedicated for the cemetery west of Palmer, and a burial was made, long before the town of Palmer was established. A ten acre plot in the northwest corner of the southwest quarter of Section 32, Twp. 15, R. 8, was donated to the community for this purpose by the owner, Mr. Benjamin Alspaugh, one of the pioneer settlers.

The first burial in the cemetery was his own daughter, Sellissa M. Alspaugh, who died December 10, 1872, at the age of 15 years. A small marble stone, weathered by the passing of years, marks her grave in the northwest part of the cemetery, where most of the first burials were made. It is said that the parents had intended that this would be their burial place, but evidently they moved away and have long been forgotten to this community.

Rose Hill Cemetery is today one of the most beautiful to be found, thanks to its natural favorable location, and the care given it by local organizations and individuals.

Compliments of
GEREN DRUG
Central City

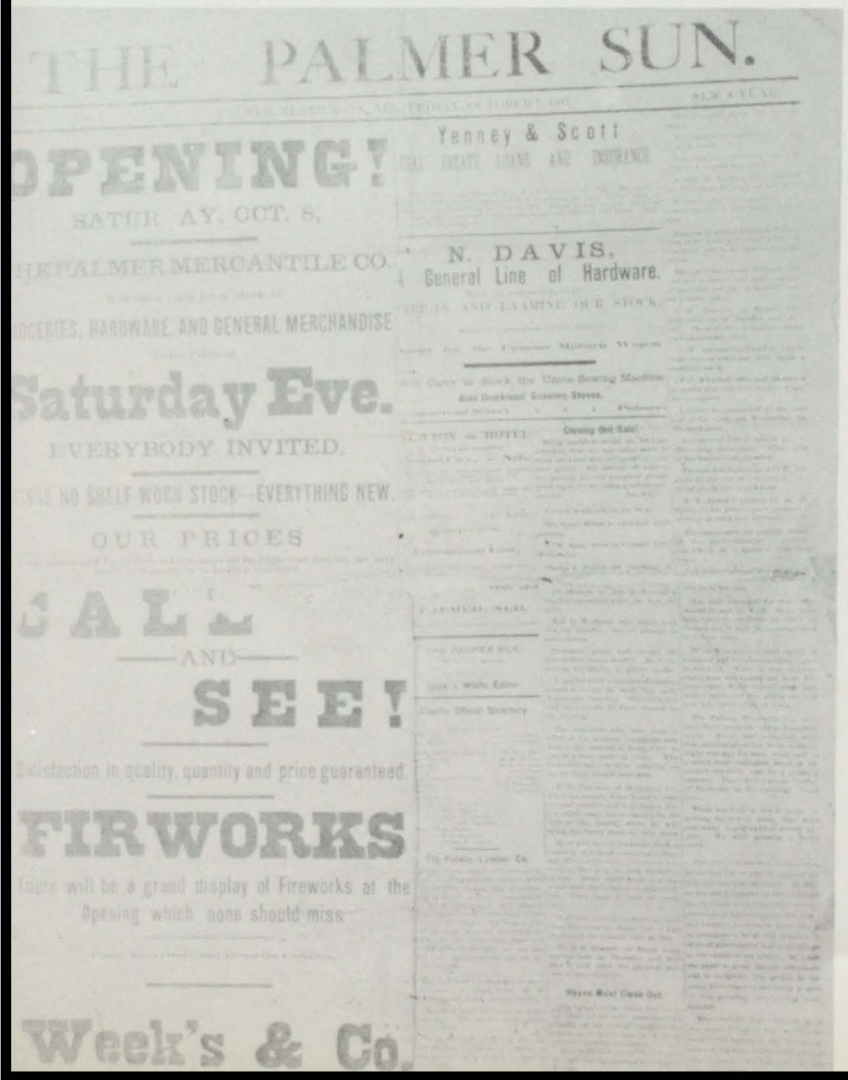
Compliments of
NELSON MACHINE SHOP
Central City

THRESHING IN 1893 NEAR PALMER
James Peck, owner of the outfit is standing on the horse power unit. At left, Mr. and Mrs. Orlando Campbell stand by the grain wagon.

PALMER BAND, ABOUT 1903
Top Row: . . . .? Dave Foster, Henry Wells, ...?, ...? Middle Row: Baird, Baird, ...? . . . .? Baird. Bottom Row: . . . .?, Grant Ire, . . . ? Harry Fiblier, Thomas Fidlier.

RAY HUNT'S THRESHING OUTFIT, 1917
From left, on tool box: Wilson McMillan and Wm. Beyers; on lower platform: Ray Hunt and Kinsey Forsythe. Right on water wagon: Henry Hunt.

FIRST NEWSPAPER PRINTED IN PALMER, OCT. 7, 1887.


THE PALMER SUN.

OPENING!
SATUR AY, OCT. 8,
PALMER MERCANTILE CO.
GROCERIES, HARDWARE AND GENERAL MERCHANDISE
Saturday Eve.
EVERYBODY INVITED.
THIS IS NO SHELF WORN STOCK—EVERYTHING NEW.
OUR PRICES
CALL
AND
SEE!
Satisfaction in quality, quantity and price guaranteed.
FIRWORKS
There will be a grand display of Fireworks at the Opening which none should miss
Week's & Co.

Yenney & Scott
REAL ESTATE LOANS AND INSURANCE

N. DAVIS,
A General Line of Hardware.
CALL AND EXAMINE OUR STOCK.

FRANK M. KNAPP

LIVED FOR 65 YEARS IN THIS COMMUNITY

When Frank Mahlon Knapp died on June 7, 1937, at the age of nearly 80 years, he had lived in the Loup Valley community northeast of Palmer for 65 years, a record at that time. He was born at Delhi, Iowa, in 1857, and came to this community in 1872 with his parents. Frank's father, J. C. Knapp, was the first teacher in School district 31, and Frank and his two brothers and three sisters were among the first pupils in the school.

In 1916, following the death of his father, Frank Knapp was married to Miss Birdia Randall. They had no children of their own, but were foster parents to a number of young people during their married life. He is survived by his widow.

BURLINGTON SECTION CREW ABOUT 1904
Left to Right: Tupper (bridge boss), Smith (agent), agent's helper, ... ?, Norton Lambert, ... ?, Loren McMurrin, Bill McMurrin, Clem Lambert, Grover Farlee, Frank Freelend, Joe Corigan, section boss.

Newspapers Published in Palmer

At least six different newspapers started publication in Palmer prior to the establishment of the Palmer Journal with its first issue published on June 29, 1911. Most of the earlier publications were of short duration, expiring after a few issues, or at most, after a year or two. The Palmer Journal, on the other hand, seemed to prosper from the start, and has kept pace with the development of the community.

List of newspapers, the editors and date of first issues:

The Palmer Sun, Chas. I. White, October 7, 1887.

The Palmer Express, J. C. L. Wisly, December 15, 1899.

The Palmer Record, Geo. B. Picket, April 5, 1901.

The Palmer Prodigal, Fred G. Shaffer, 1892.

The Palmer Echo, R. I. Elliott, March 18, 1903.

The Herald, George Charron, July 16, 1909.

The Palmer Journal, Ralph E. DeWolfe, June 29, 1911.

In March, 1913, Perry Gage became editor of the Journal, operating it until February 1, 1934, when Miner E. Harris took over. On January 17, 1955, Warren Rice, the present editor and publisher, took charge

Here are a few stories gleaned from the first issue of the Palmer Echo, published March 18, 1903:

Abram Colborn died March 16, 1903.

A meeting was held by Palmer business men to consider establishing a ferry across the Loup River. (There was no bridge then). They sent a committee down to the river bank to look things over, but the spring flood made the water so high they had to postpone action.

A "crowd" of young men went to St. Paul Sunday on a handcar. The river raised and washed out the river embankment. Chunks of ice were strewn on the track when the boys tried to come home. They speeded up to get past the bad spot and the handcar slammed into a telegraph pole that had lodged across the track. Then they found fifty yards of track washed out. The young men stayed in St. Paul overnight returning home next day, but not by handcar nor railway.

AN EARLY DEAL IN REAL ESTATE

On December 30, 1876, Thomas Blinkinsop received title to the 160 acres he had homesteaded on south of Palmer. It consisted of the east half (80 acres) of the farm where Dorothy Nicholas now lives 1 1/2 miles south of Palmer and the 80 acres south of there occupied now by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Vincik, where Shady Rest service station used to be.

Mr. Blinkinsop's land title was signed by President Chester A. Arthur. In 1877, John F. Campbell purchased this land for a team of oxen and $75 in cash.

Compliments of
CENTRAL GRAIN CO.
Central City

Compliments of
SACK LUMBER CO.
Central City

Compliments of
DINSDALE BROS.
Palmer

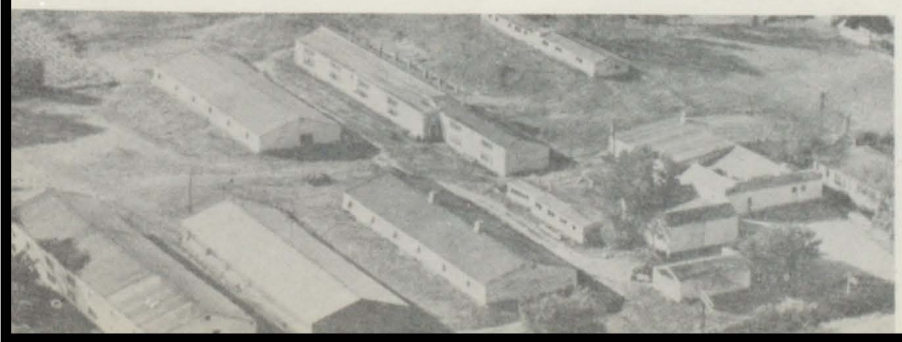
DETOUR

Yes, there were detours in the horse and buggy days too. This team and buggy was used by Harold Rice soon after he began carrying mail on a rural route out of Palmer over thirty-six years ago. When the bridge in the background was closed for repairs, he had to detour around it through a pasture. One day while on the detour, he gave his horses a rest long enough to take this picture of his "mail wagon."

The Palmer Co-operative Creamery was built in 1919, and for nearly forty years, has served as a good market for cream, eggs, and poultry. Floyd Stratman has been manager since 1942.

LEMMERMAN HATCHERY
AND POULTRY FARM

This airplane view shows only that part of the Lemmerman Poultry plant that is located within the city limits of Palmer. Eight more big buildings, from 26 to 40 feet wide and 120 to 340 feet long, are located on the farm east of town. Total floor space is 120,000 square feet. This would cover an area more than 90 feet wide by one-fourth mile long. Lemmermans employ an average of 20 persons besides family members, to operate their hatchery, farm and modern uptown store, where remedies, equipment and feeds are sold. They maintain a flock of 75,000 laying hens, Leghorns and DeKalb hybrids.



COOLIDGE HOSPITAL
AND SANITARIUM

Over forty years ago, Charles L. Coolidge, a farmer near Palmer, and a long time resident of Merrick County, decided to do something worthwhile for his community. The result was the Coolidge Hospital and Sanitarium in Palmer, built in 1917. This building has been kept in excellent condition and the Hospital and Sanitarium continues to care for about a dozen patients regularly.

Doctors C. S. Minnick and Wm. Arrasmith, Mr. G. S. Lambert and M. V. Lambert were among those who co-operated with Mr. Coolidge in establishing the institution, and seventy individuals subscribed as stockholders. M. V. Lambert has continued to serve as secretary-treasurer to the present time. In addition to cash furnished for the construction of the building, Mr. Coolidge deeded 160 acres of good farm land, located three miles south of Palmer, for the benefit of the hospital. Mr. and Mrs. Coolidge were parents of two children, a son and a daughter, both of whom died in early adulthood. Mrs. Coolidge also died many years before the death of Mr. Coolidge, which occurred in 1922 in Palmer.

For the past eleven years Mrs. Carrie Knapp has been in charge of the Coolidge Hospital and Sanitarium.

STORAGE ROOM FOR NEARLY
1,000,000 BUSHELS OF GRAIN

Palmer's two elevator companies have a combined storage capacity of about 750,000 bushels of grain. Their buildings cover a large area in the south part of town and extend high above the tree tops. Both The Farmers Grain and Coal Co., and Dindale Bros., Inc., have added several new buildings to their facilities during the past few years.

With the large government bins at the edge of town, Palmer has a total storage capacity of about 1,000,000 bushels. That amount equals two old fashioned farm wagon loads for each man, woman and child in the county.

Below; a part of the grain buildings of elevators along the Burlington track in Palmer.

Clarks

The early settlement of Clarks and vicinity dates back to 1865, when Calvin B. Hartwell located about three miles northeast of the present town and opened a ranch for the accommodation of stage coach passengers and other travelers. In the early day the term "ranch" meant a sort of country inn, stage coach station, and supply depot, not too different from the present day motel. The Hartwell home was called Junction Ranch and it was at this point that the Mormon Trail and the old Military Road joined.

In the first years, after the coming of the Hartwell family, the community life of the few scattered homesteaders centered around Junction Ranch. Mrs. Maud Brown, now a resident of Clarks, is a granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Hartwell.

Clarks was platted in 1866 and was named after Mr. S. H. H. Clark, then superintendent of the Union Pacific. That year, John McLean settled there, and in 1868 came A. Kerr, Thomas Tague and F. Coyle.

In 1869, Clarks post office was established with Mr. Kerr as postmaster and in 1871, the first school was opened and held in a sod shanty erected on the C. D. Hartwell land.

The first religious services were held in the winter of 1869-70 at the Hartwell home by Rev. David Marquette, a Methodist minister. There were also services held in the home of John Higgins on section 21, by Father Ryan. In the spring of 1871, the first Sunday School was organized, called the Union Sunday School, with A. P. Daniels as superintendent. Rev. John Gunderman, of the Baptist denomination, held services in the granary on the Jesse Turner farm and the congregation filled the building to overflowing.

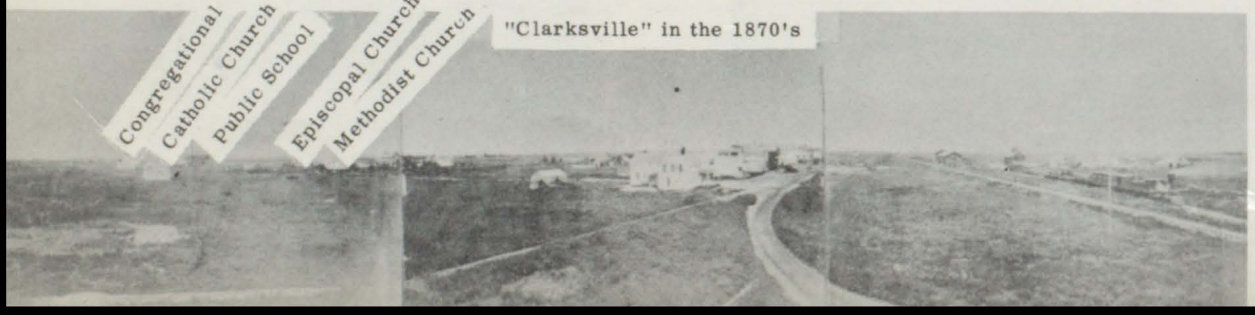
The Clarks Messenger was the first newspaper of the town with the first issue on May 1, 1878, James J. Kreider, editor. The following year, after the sudden disappearance of Kreider, J. C. Hartwell took over. In 1890, the name was changed to The Clarks Leader. The Clarks Enterprise was established in 1892, and continued publication 58 years, being discontinued in 1948, when the publishers, Al Leonard and Marie Carlson, moved the equipment to Cedar Rapids, Nebraska. In 1950, John L. Carter purchased the Silver Creek Sand, moved the plant to Clarks and started the Clarks News, printing both papers in Clarks.

Clarks prospered and grew and during the 1890's was easily the second town in the county in size, with over 600 population.

C. E. Persinger, in his "History of Merrick County," says that there was one time in the early days when Clarks lacked only one vote of being selected as the state capital. That was when pressure was being applied to the state legislature to move the capital to some point nearer the center of the state.

Clarks is a town of nice homes, beautiful trees and more paved streets than most towns its size. The people are friendly and progressive. It has a good public library which is open daily. Its schools and its bank rank high.

Compliments of FARMERS UNION CO-OP., Clarks
Gas, Cream, Produce



WM. DOUGLAS

Douglas Store in Clarks - Seventy Continuous Years in Business.

MRS. CALVIN (ELIZABETH) HARTWELL

DOUGLAS STORE AT CLARKS 70 YEARS IN BUSINESS

Wm. Douglas and Company, general store of Clarks, has operated continuously since 1888. This record of seventy years in business may be the longest of any in the county. During these years the store was under the management of Wm. Douglas from 1888 to 1919, when his son, M. B. Douglas, took over and has been at the helm to this day. Assisting in the store are M. B's. brother, Lawrence, and his son, Wm. R. Douglas.

Other members of the Douglas family prominent in the business and professional field in Clarks are: Vincent Douglas, another son of the elder, deceased Wm. Douglas, in the insurance business; Donald B. Douglas, son of M. B. Douglas, postmaster since 1949; and Dr. R. R. Douglas, cousin of M. B. Douglas. Wm. Douglas, founder of the store, died in 1930.

CALVIN HARTWELLS WERE EARLY SETTLERS

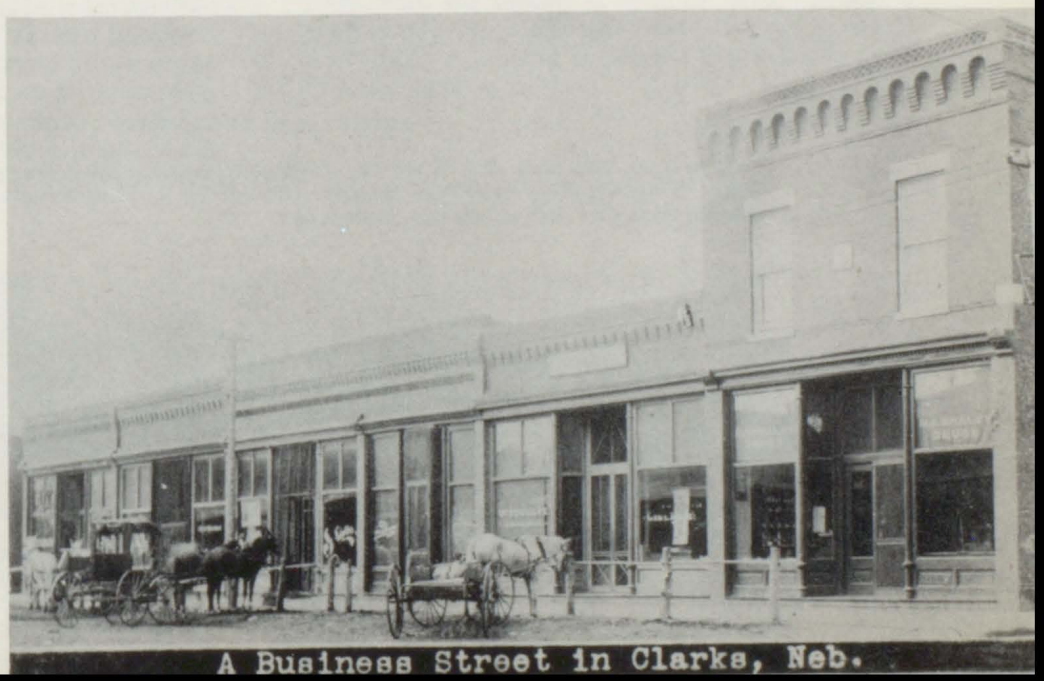
When Mr. and Mrs. Calvin B. Hartwell and family homesteaded on land midway between Clarks and Havens in March, 1865, their nearest neighbor to the east was seven miles and westward ten miles. Their homestead was called Junction Ranch, as it was at the junction of the old Morman Trail and the Military road. The nearest post office was Columbus.

Calvin Hartwell was born on a Virginia plantation in 1810. He was married to Miss Elizabeth Ragsdale in Indiana in 1837. The family moved to Missouri in 1849, then to Douglas County, Nebraska, in 1862, with their six youngest children. The three oldest were married. Mr. and Mrs. Hartwell remained in the Clarks community until death. Mr. Hartwell died in 1878. Mrs. Elizabeth Hartwell died in 1916, just a few weeks before she would have attained the age of ninety-seven years.

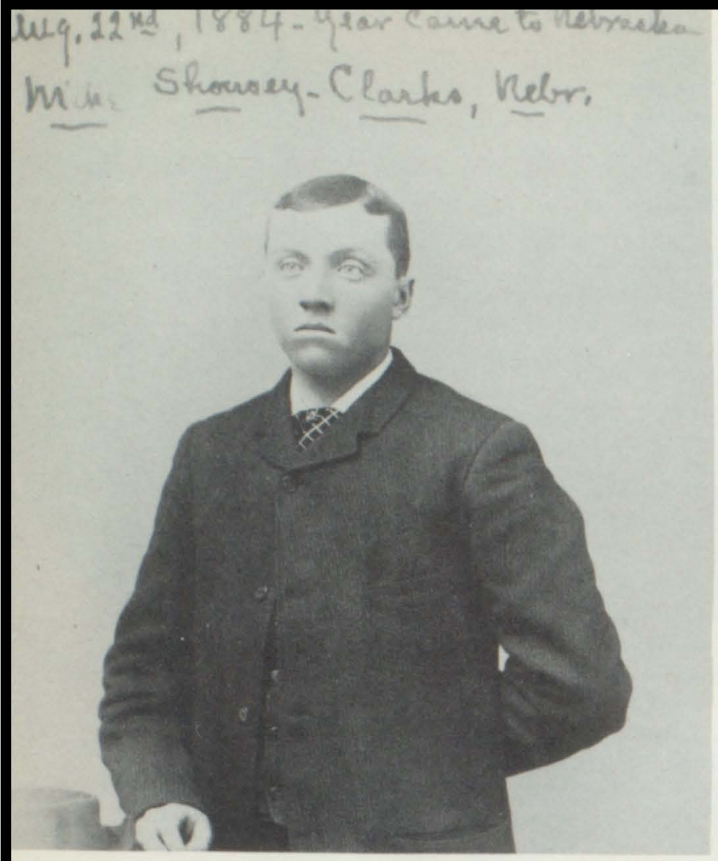
The Hartwell family has always been widely known in this section of Nebraska and has been prominent in business, social, and educational affairs.

Compliments of
V. DOUGLAS INSURANCE
Clarks

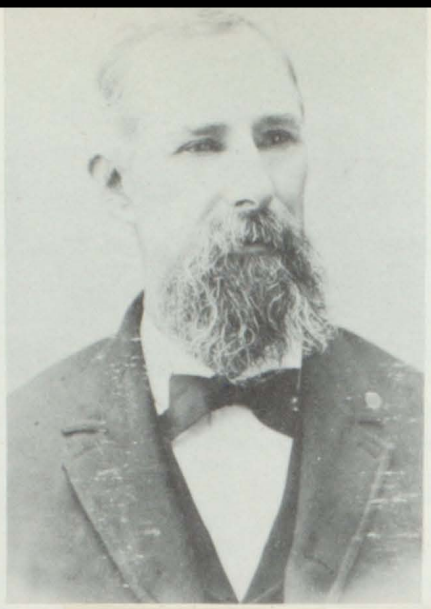
Compliments of
WILLIAM DOUGLAS & COMPANY
Clarks



A Business Street in Clarks, Neb.



Mike As A Young Fellow



Built First Home In Silver Creek
Mr. and Mrs. Frank B. Hobert built the first house in Silver Creek, and were early homesteaders there.

Compliments of
BANK OF CLARKS

Compliments of
ART'S GARAGE
Clarks, Nebraska
Art Schlondorf - Glenn Colby

COUNTY FAIR AT CLARKS

The year 1912 was one of the two or three times that the Merrick County Fair was held at Clarks. It was like a big community picnic with baseball and a beef barbeque as top features. Clarks baseball team wore dark uniforms in those days.

EMIL BECKER OF CLARKS RESIDED IN COUNTY 86 YEARS

Emil Becker, of Clarks, who was 90 years old on July 13, 1958, has resided in Merrick County for eighty-six years. Mr. Becker tells the following story of the early days.

In 1871, Emil's father, Herman Becker, who had been born at Portland, Wisconsin, came to Merrick County and filed for a homestead in Section 8, Township 12, Range 8, located five miles west of Chapman and five miles south of Worms. The next year, on October 1, 1872, Mr. and Mrs. Herman Becker and three children arrived at Lone Tree by covered wagon. A Mr. Traver, who was in the hardware business, had built a home which was unoccupied and allowed the Becker family to live in it while Mr. Becker took one of his horses and rode on to find his homestead.

At that time the first court house was being built in Lone Tree. The upper floor was laid and the pioneers took advantage of it for dancing.

When Mr. Becker came to his homestead, he found that a young couple, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Rembolt, had settled on adjoining land. Mr. Rembolt was in Grand Island that day, but Mrs Rembolt, who was only sixteen years old, was very happy at the prospect of having neighbors and she made hot coffee for Mr. Becker.

Mr. Becker returned to Lone Tree, loaded his wagon with lumber and drove with his family to his homestead. They camped in their wagon while Mr. Becker built a 16 by 18 foot house with shingle roof and a 20 foot lean-to one end which extended 6 feet beyond the width of the house. For his two horses and one cow he built a sod barn with roof made of poles from Wood River and covered with slough grass.

The next spring the weather was nice until Easter Sunday, April 14, when a bad blizzard struck and lasted three days. The pioneers, being unprepared, suffered much discomfort and loss. The terrific gale made it impossible to go outside and care for stock. Mr. Becker's horses became so hungry they ate the grass roof off the barn, leaving it open to the storm. The horses were brought into the lean-to at the house, but the cow wandered off and was found later in Warm Slough three miles south. She had survived the blizzard. A sow and five pigs were buried in the snow.. The Beckers brought the five pigs into the cellar.

Other settlers in that part of the country were the Beckmans and the Frauns. Beckman had forty head of cattle, and they all tried to crowd into a small shed to escape the blizzard and all smothered except the bull. A Mr. Davis went out to feed cattle and died in a snow drift.

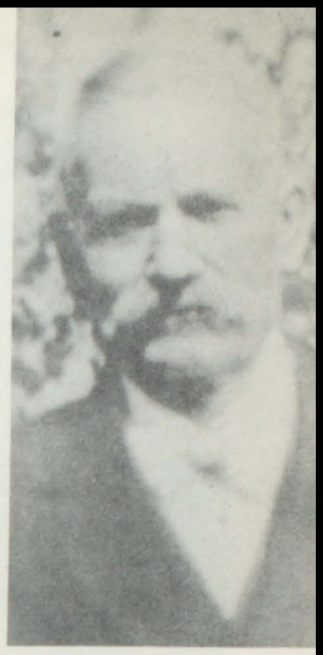
In June, following the blizzard, the Baumeister family settled near the Beckers.

The three Becker children attended school and grew up in the Chapman vicinity. Emil attended college in Iowa. His first wife died shortly after they were married. Later he was married to Katie Kasparie, sister to the late John Kasparie of Palmer.

As the years went by, Emil Becker became prominent in community life and known to many throughout the county.

After being elected as County Clerk in 1896, he moved with his family, to Central City. He served for four years. In 1905, he bought a half section farm one-half mile north of Clarks and moved on it with his wife and six children. Mr. Becker was very successful as a farmer and insurance salesman. Six more children were born after the family moved to Clarks.

Of the twelve children, Harvey died in infancy, Arney was killed in World War II, Helen Nelson, Alice Merihew and Erma Halleck are now living in Washington; Herman, Lillian Wells, Emil, Jr., and Earl live in California; Marie Kadlecek resides in Omaha and George lives with his father in Clarks. Mrs. Becker died in March, 1955. Mr. Becker, now in his 91st year, is in good health and retains a keen interest in life.



HERMAN BECKER

MR. AND MRS. EMIL BECKER

Compliments of
GLANTZ FARM SERVICE
Central City

Chapman

Shoemaker's Point was the stage coach station and community center in the southwest part of the county in the early 1860's. After its abandonment, several years elapsed before the first business building was built in Chapman in 1871, by Messrs. L. Reed and C. A. Leake for a general trading store. The first real general store was opened in 1873, by J. I. Walker, who sold to W. H. Morris in 1877.

In 1878, the first bridge across the Platte at Chapman was built, opening up a good trade territory from northern Hamilton County. Chapman then grew rapidly in size and importance.

The first school in Chapman was taught by Mrs. Enoch Aurand in her home in 1871. In 1872, a public school building was erected.

Chapman was named after a roadmaster of the Union Pacific railroad. John Donivan, the local section boss, was the first postmaster.

J. P. Roubal was manager of the Chapman baseball team in 1923. He's now serving his 3rd term as County Clerk.

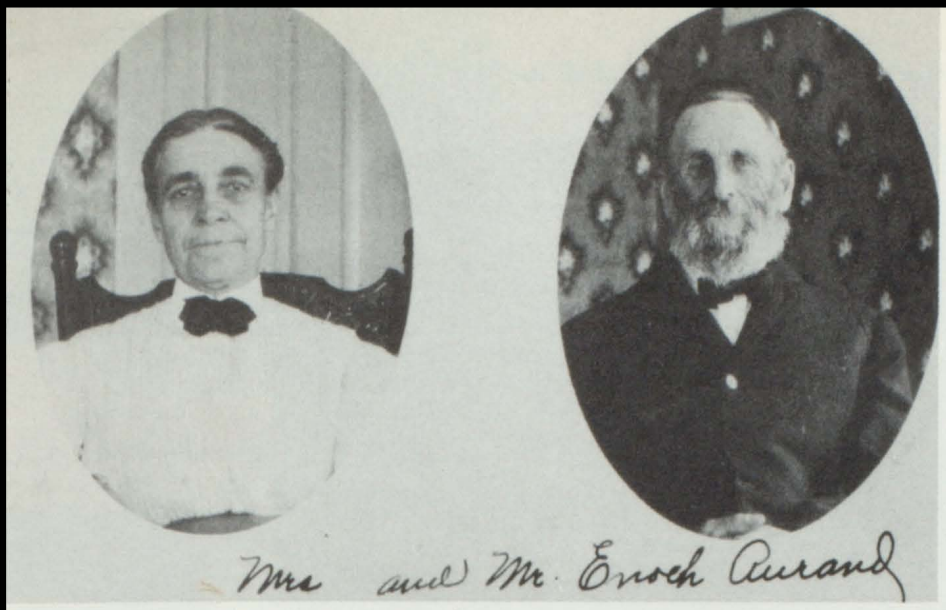
CHAPMAN BASEBALL PLAYERS MAKE GOOD

Osborne Ruben was bat boy in 1922. He later became superintendent of the Chapman schools.

Compliments of
COMMUNITY
SALES CO.
Elmer Galusha,
Owner
Central City

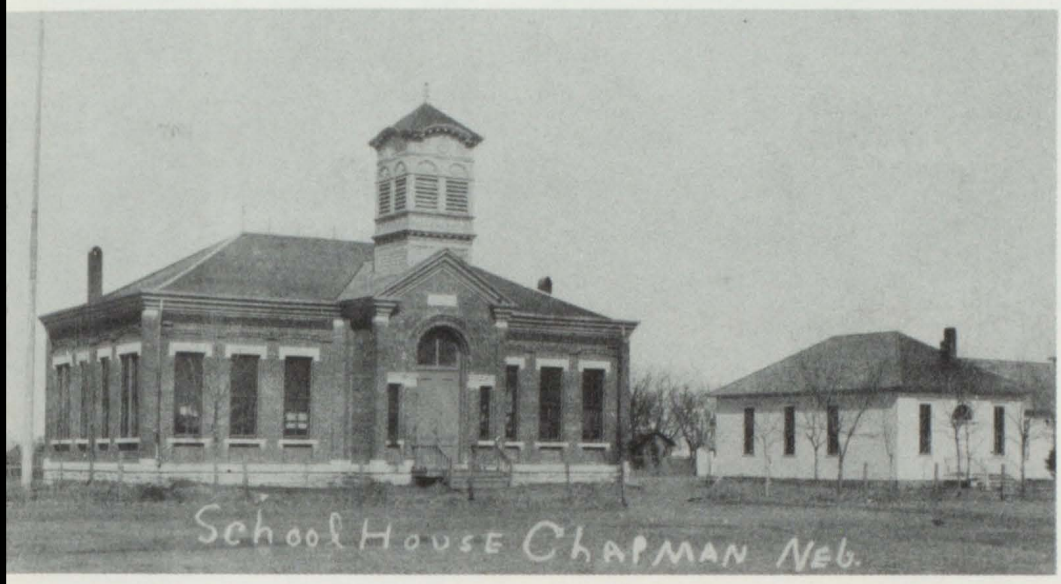
Compliments of
T. B. HORD
GRAIN COMPANY

Compliments of CHAPMAN CO-OP. MERCANTILE CO.
(Complete Locker Service)



Among the leaders of the early settlers of Merrick County were Mr. and Mrs. Enoch Aurand. They homesteaded in 1871 on land adjoining Chapman on the west.

Mr. Aurand was born in Ohio in 1842, enlisted in the Union army in 1864. In 1866 he was married to Miss Ellen E. Walker, who also a native of Ohio. Mrs. Aurand died in 1868. On December 8, 1870, Mr. Aurand was married to Hannah L. Hult of Ohio. Five children were born to them: Lessie who died at the age of five; Stella (Mrs. Albert Schmutz), Lora, Orva, and Effie.

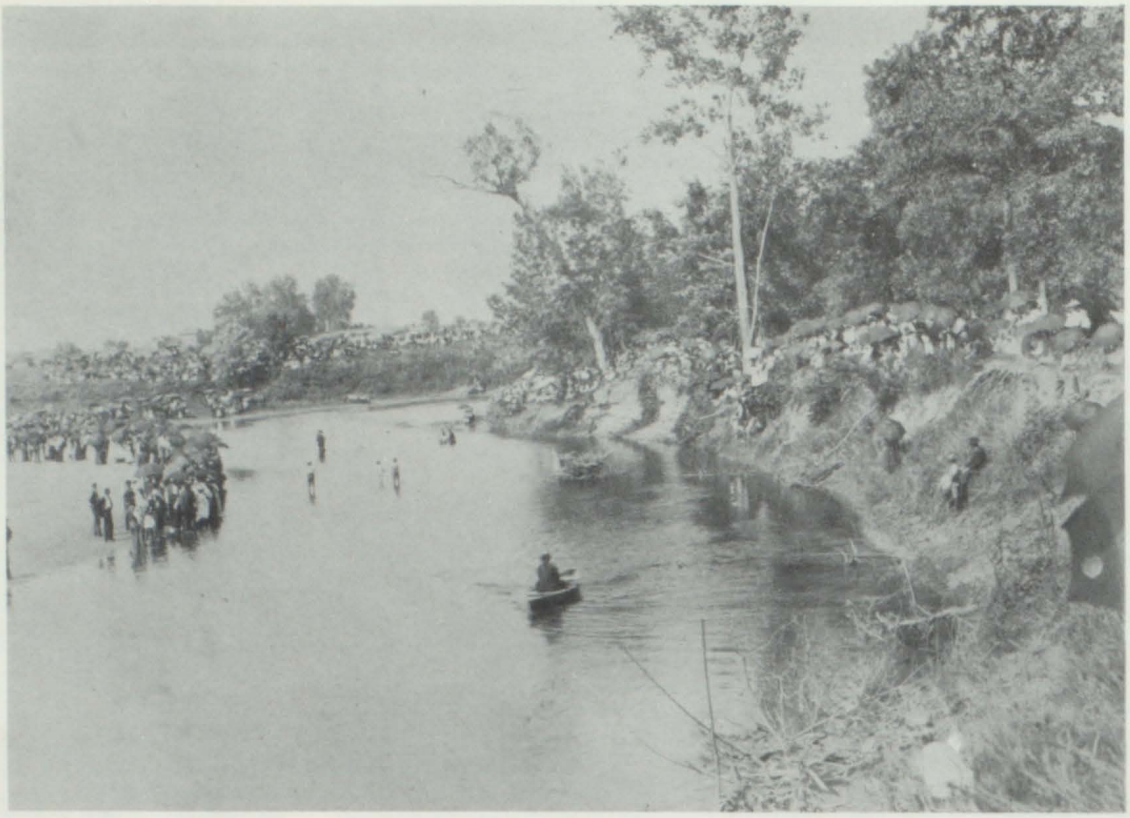


The schoolhouse built in 1889 (left) was torn down in 1917 to make room for the new schoolhouse (below left). The gymnasium and auditorium, at right of the classroom building, was built in 1924-'25.

Compliments of
CHAPMAN
COOPERATIVE
ASSOCIATION

Compliments of
COOPERATIVE
CREDIT
ASSOCIATION
Chapman

EARLY DAY BAPTISM IN THE PLATTE RIVER BY CHAPMAN BAPTIST CHURCH



"Other" Towns of Merrick County

ELVIRA - This town was named county seat at the time Merrick County was established in 1858. It was to be located about two miles south of where Clarks now stands, but no town was ever built.

WORMS - This inland town was founded about the same time as the Lutheran Church was established there in 1874. The early settlers were chiefly of German descent, and the village was named after the German town of the same name, in Rheinhessen, Germany. A store and post office was established. The post office was discontinued with the coming of rural delivery of mail. The town now consists of the big Lutheran Church and Parochial School; a large Farmers Union general store; a tavern; and an auto garage.

SUNRISE - In the early days a store, post office and blacksmith shop comprised the inland town of Sunrise in Mead precinct. It was located on what is now the Nesbitt farm close to the Nance County line, 15 miles northeast of Palmer. The town has been inactive for many years. An unused church building close by was recently moved to Palmer to become the sanctuary of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of which Rev. Carl Dooley is pastor.

HAVENS - Located half way between Clarks and Silver Creek, Havens still has an elevator in operation, but the remainder of the business section is practically unused. Less than a quarter of a century ago, its store, garage, picture theatre, hall and post office were in active operation.

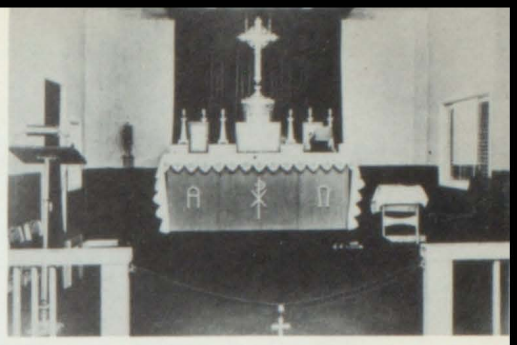
Compliments of
THIRD CITY LIVESTOCK COMMISSION CO.
Grand Island, Nebraska

Compliments of
GAGLE SERVICE STATION

Altar, Clarks Methodist

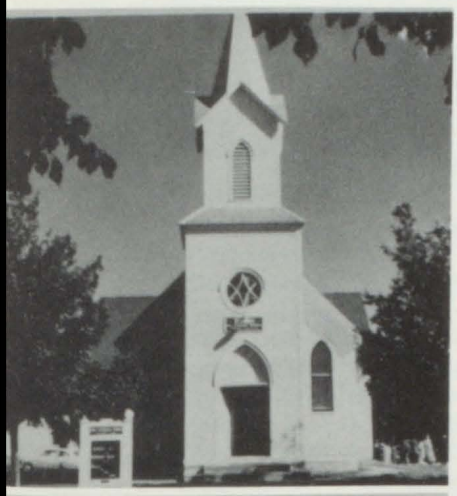
Churches

Of Merrick County
Information Gathered And Presented By
D. E. Magnuson, Chapman



Altar, St. Michael's Catholic

Worms Lutheran Church



WORMS LUTHERAN CHURCH

The first services were held in the Bader schoolhouse, District No. 28 and in the Witt schoolhouse then located in the southwest corner of Section 20, Twp. 13, Rg. 8, Merrick County. The constitution was adopted on September 17, 1874 and the formal organization completed on September 20, 1874. The first church edifice was erected in 1878 and the present edifice in 1893. The first pastor was Rev. August Leuthaeuser from 1874 to 1876.

Succeeding pastors were:

Rev. F. H. Jahn	1876 to 1891	Rev. Wm. Ludwig	1908 to 1919
Rev. Deuver	1891 to 1895	Rev. Franz Frese	1919 to 1932
Rev. John D. Schroeder	1895 to 1903	Rev. H. Wm. Meyer	1933 to 1949
Rev. K. Jahn	1903 to 1908	Rev. A. F. Otto	1949 to 1958

Charter Members were:
August Krause, John A. Ruff, August Wendt, Johann Miller, Herman Miller, Henry Wemken, Carl Engelke, J. Pohlman, H. Ahrens, Carl Krugel, Carl Gatzke, A. Dusterbeck, John Peters, Louis Bemer, Johannes Bader, Wilhelm Miller, Friedrich Witt, Lorenz Schmidt, Carl Siebert, Dietrich Rebbe, Wilhelm Krause, Friedrich Spathold, Wilhelm Guenther, Christopher Collman, Johannes E. Bemer, Herman Schipman, Leopold Buchfinck, Johannes C. Becker.

CHAPMAN METHODIST CHURCH

The church was organized prior to 1888 with services held in the frame schoolhouse in Merrick County school District No. 9. The church edifice was erected in 1888 and 1889. The first pastor was Rev. Wilson. Rev. J. Willis Srack is the present pastor. The first board of trustees were E. I. Gallogly, Cashes Thomas and William Easter.

Charter Members were:
Mr. and Mrs. Geo. P. Fishburn, Mr. and Mrs. Ezra I. Gallogly, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew G. Buell, Mr. and Mrs. Alonzo Bellows, Mr. and Mrs. Cashes Thomas, Mr. and Mrs. Beenblossom, Mr. and Mrs. John L. Martin, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Easter, Mr. and Mrs. M. Osborn, Mrs. Samuel Easter, Mrs. Joseph Carey, Grandma Gallogly.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
Chapman

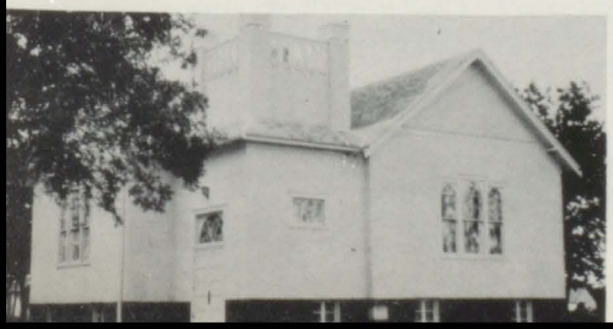
Organized on January 26, 1886. The first pastor was Rev. S. B. Hayes. The first church clerk was Mr. Alonzo Sutton. The church edifice was erected in 1886 and remodeled in 1925. The present pastor is Rev. William Pfau.

Charter Members were:
James W. Teagarden, James J. Gallogly, Newton Lounsbery, John H. Sutton, James M. Ogden, Alonzo Sutton, Martha Sutton, Hannah Aurand, Enoch Aurand, Jane Omelia, Walter Bush, Sarah Bush, Ella Ogden.

Chapman Methodist Church

Chapman Baptist Church - 1886

Present Baptist Church at Chapman



Compliments of
GORGENS MARKET
Central City

Compliments of
FARMERS NATIONAL BANK
Central City

THE GRAND ISLAND METHODIST CHURCHES
Of Vieregg and Prairie Creek Townships:

These organizations were originally affiliated with the German Methodist Synod and came into being in the year 1873.

The first pastor was Reverend C. W. Lauenstein.

The church building and parsonage were erected in 1873 on the southeast quarter of Section 7-12-8, Merrick County, immediately north of the school house in Merrick County School District No. 32. The work was discontinued about the year 1919 or 1920, the last pastor being Rev. Herman A. Jungmeyer. He had been preceded by Rev. G. J. Mueller and Rev. Tonat. The church building and parsonage were sold to Theodore Buchfinck and are now part of the improvements on his farm in the northeast quarter of Section 18-12-8.

PIERCE CHAPEL METHODIST CHURCH

This church organization dates from the year 1889 when the first church building was erected. The first pastor was Rev. R. K. Pierce and the present pastor is Rev. Walter E. Neth of Clarks, Nebraska.

The church building was moved to its present site on May 28, 1913. Beginning with that date, the following pastors have served the church: Rev. William St. John Sanders; Rev. H. W. Wegner; Rev. William Van Burn; Rev. W. F. Taylor; Rev. G. E. Martin; Rev. E. A. Gaither; Rev. A. M. Olson; Rev. Oscar Strombarn; Rev. E. W. Price; Rev. M. W. Pickerel; Rev. Virgil Leach; Rev. Melvin Ireland; Rev. O. A. Knott; Rev. U. G. Rosement; Rev. J. W. Tourinlson; Rev. L. R. Hansberry; Rev. L. W. Mullis and Rev. Walter E. Neth.

Among the charter members and early members of this church, the following names are noted: Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Currey; Mr. and Mrs. G. A. McConnell; Mr. and Mrs. Frank Rose; Mr. and Mrs. Klar Betts; Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Shively; Mr. and Mrs. William Burger; Mr. and Mrs. John Lumadue; Mr. and Mrs. T. D. Betts; Mr. and Mrs. Jerome Peck; Mr. and Mrs. Bert Ferguson; Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Waite; Mr. and Mrs. James Booth.

GERMAN METHODIST CHURCH
South of Palmer

GERMAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH:

Located six miles southeast of Palmer on the former H. C. vonAschwege farm. It was probably organized in the early 1870's. The oldest marked grave in the adjacent cemetery is datea 1873. Arnold Aschwege now lives on the farm. Early names in the parish included: H. C. von Aschwege; August Brunks; August Muellers; Schutz; Scheibes; Gerd Boelts, John and Gus Boelts; and others.

No regular services were held for many years. Occasional burials have been made since the church building was sold in 1944 to the St. Paul Lutheran Church of Central City. The lumber was used in their new sanctuary.

ST. PETER'S CATHOLIC CHURCH
Clarks

Established as a mission in the late 1860's and administered by Father Ryan of Columbus, Nebraska. At that time services were held in the old section house located one mile east of the present town of Clarks.

In 1871 the Union Pacific Railroad Company deeded, for church purposes, a plot of ground to John Higgins and Luke Lamb as trustees for the Catholic Church of Clarksville, Nebraska. Early in 1872 a frame church building was erected on what is now Lot 5 in Block 12 of the present Town of Clarks.

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CHAPMAN CO-OP. MERCANTILE CO.
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T. B. HORD GRAIN COMPANY

Following Father Ryan came Fathers Gerry, York and Gleason, all administering from Columbus, Nebraska. Later on the needs were administered by Fathers Delfoss and O'Conner, pastors at Central City, Nebraska.

With the appointment of Father John Kunkel as pastor in 1918, the present parish of St. Peter's was incorporated and eight years later, in 1926, the new brick church building was erected at its present location. Father Kunkel served the parish for thirty years before being transferred to St. Francis parish in Omaha.

Present pastor is Father Paul B. Kannaby who has served the parish since the transfer of Father Kunkel in 1948.

Names of some of the earlier member families: Higgins; Lambs; Roachs; Donleys; Shanahans; Feehans; Fagans; Hanleys; Douglas'; Lavelles; Claytons and Naughtons.

THE PRAIRIE CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

Located eight miles west of Central City on the Ormsby Road.

Organized on January 7, 1883 at the Pemberton Schoolhouse.

First Pastor, Rev. J. E. Ingram; First Deacons, John H. Sutton and R. T. Lewis.

Charter Members:
Perry M. Sutton, Ella Sutton, Adam J. Harshberger, A. M. Harshberger, James E. Fitch, Mrs. James E. Fitch, Francis M. Hirst, Elizabeth Hirst, James A. Sinsel, E. A. Sinsel, B. F. Jones, Mary Jones, Jacob Schmelzer, Mrs. Jacob Schmelzer, R. T. Lewis, L. E. Lewis, Wm. F. Sinsel, Fannie A. Sinsel, John H. Sutton, Hannah Sutton, James W. Teagarden, Joel F. Widman, John Newlon, Mrs. John Newlon, F. L. Frazier and Mrs. R. S. Frazier.

This church was discontinued and the church edifice was sold at public auction on August 25, 1954.

EMMANUEL EVANGELICAL UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH
Vieregg Precinct

Date of Organization, 1872.

First Pastor, Rev. H. Stellrecht.

Early Roll of Members contained these names:
Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Wiegert; Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Rembolt; Mr. and Mrs. Carl Schleuter; William Wegner; Mary D. Baumeister; Henry Wiegert; Fred L. Wiegert; Wm. Glause; Mary Glause; Mrs. Wm. Wegner; Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Rudolf and Mrs. August Retzlaff.

The church edifice was erected in 1879. The present pastor is Rev. Frank Schroeder.

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH
MIDWEST SYNOD
Vieregg Precinct

This organization was formed by a group of Merrick and Hall County persons and meetings were held in Hall County School District No. 45.

The church edifice was erected in 1900 and the first pastor was Rev. Herman Schuman. The church was discontinued about the year 1910 and the building was sold and removed from its location on the east side of Section 12, Twp. 12, Rg. 9, just across the Merrick County line in Hall County.

Among the names of Charter Members the following families are mentioned:
Frank Niemoth; John Niemoth; Robert Kunze; Henry Blume; August Buchfinck; William Gunther; Machtlein Ahrens; Robert Buchow and Charles Beyersdorf.

THE GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
Central City

Originally this was a Mission of the Fridhem Lutheran Church of Hordville, Nebr. during the years 1902-1903 and 1904.

The first church building was erected in 1904 and dedicated in September of that year.

The first pastor was Rev. A. G. Ander of the Hordville Church. Other pastors included Revs. Gibson; Rydquist; Degner and visiting pastor Oscar Johnson.

The present pastor is Rev. Carl A. E. Gustafson.

Among the early organizational members are noted:
Members of the Amos Bankson family; John and Johanna Bankson; Mr. and Mrs. Peter Nelson; Mr. and Mrs. John M. Nelson; Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Nelson; Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Fagerstrom; Mr. and Mrs. Axel Levene; Mr.

and Mrs. Nels O. Nordstrom; Mr. and Mrs. John L. Nelson.

This church affiliates with the Augustana National Lutheran Council.

THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH
Central City

This church came into being during the 1880's and the congregation was included in a circuit served by pastors and lay workers from other established organizations.

After acquiring its present church building a number of resident pastors have served the church. One of the early pastors was Rev. Cook, whose daughter was also a minister. She was associated with another minister, Miss Bond, and the two did pioneer work in conducting services in nearby towns and in several Merrick County school houses.

The present pastor is Rev. John D. Hoschar. Sunday School is held at 10 o'clock, morning worship at 11 o'clock and evening service at 8 o'clock. Mid-week prayer services are held on Thursday evenings.

THE FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
Central City

Organized in 1906 and first church edifice erected in 1907.

The first pastor was Rev. John G. Alber and the present pastor is Rev. Melvin E. Zichek.

Brother Baldwin of Cotner College, Lincoln, Nebraska and six other interested persons started the church in answer to the Lord's Prayer "That they might all be One." Edith Dinges is the only living Charter Member.

The church has a Bible School, a Missionary Society, a Dorcas Circle and a Worker's Conference.

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH
Of Central City, Nebraska

The first service was held in Central City School in 1904 with Rev. W. F. Seeskow of Immanuel Church, Hordville, Nebraska.

Formal Organization on March 2, 1924 with thirty-five members, four of which were charter members, namely: Fred Kanter, Charles Kanter, August Butt and John Hake. The latter being the only survivor.

First pastor was Rev. H. W. Degner of Palmer, Nebraska.

The present interim pastor is Rev. O. A. Graebner of the Trinity Lutheran Church of Grand Island, Nebraska.

Pastors since organization:

Rev. H. W. Degner	1924-1925
Rev. B. Holmen	1925-1930
Rev. A. Kohtz	1930-1937
Rev. Paul Panning	1937-1941
Rev. Andrew Maken	1941
Rev. M. V. Meyer	1942-1945
Rev. M. Schabacker	1945-1951
Rev. John Knippenberg	1951-1957

First church building was erected in 1932. New building in 1944 with 148 members. Present church edifice of Mankato stone to be dedicated sometime in 1958. Present membership 285.

First marriage recorded: Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Hamilton, January 14, 1925. First baptism: LeRoy Hake, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Hake, June 20, 1925. First death recorded was Mr. Nick Mattkes.

One pastor has been sent out from this congregation, Rev. Wendell Hamilton, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Hamilton, now serving the Redeemer Lutheran Church of Sioux City, Iowa. Dale Hoffschneider is at present preparing for the ministry.

Present Officers of the Church are:

Chairman, Elmer Burhoop; Secretary, Ralph Hamilton; Treasurer, Raymond Ruge.

Elders: Paul Deichman, Francis Holtorf, Leonard Strobel.

Trustees: Louie Blase, Fred J. Ohlman, Paul Bender.

S.S.Superintendent: Weldon Hake.

THE ASSEMBLY OF GOD CHURCH
Central City, Nebraska

Organized in July 1950 and church building erected in 1951.

The first pastor was Rev. Charles Kirsch and the present pastor is Rev. G. A. Correll.

In July 1957 the church celebrated its seventh anniversary with a large number in attendance.

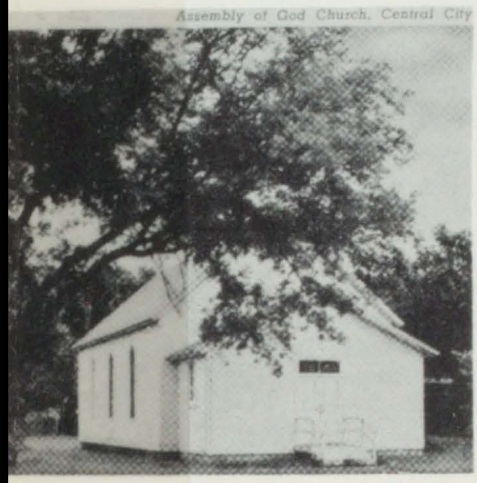
Compliments of COLUMBUS SALES PAVILION

Compliments of WEBB LIVESTOCK COMM. CO., Grand Island

SOME OF THE

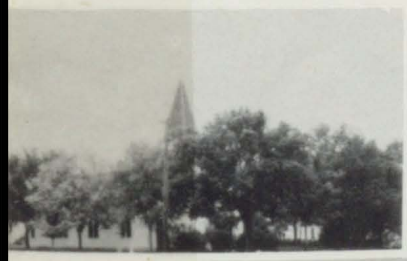
Churches OF Central City

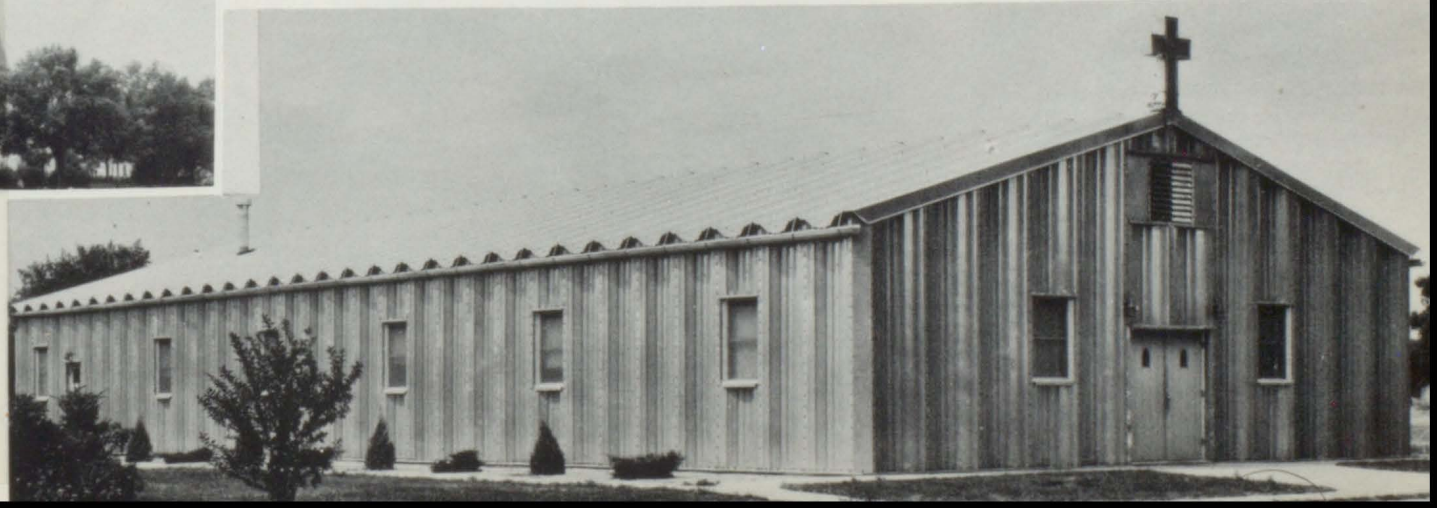
Compliments of
FARMERS
NATIONAL
BANK
Central City



St. Michael's first church

St. Michael's Catholic goes modern with metal





Sunday services begin with Sunday School at 10 A.M. and continue with morning worship service at 11:00. Evening service is at 8:00. Mid-week Bible study is held on Thursday evenings.

THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE
Central City

Organized in 1935 and first church building acquired in 1944.

The first pastor was Rev. Lenora Ball and the present pastor is Dr. R. L. Morrow.

On the opening day of the new church, September 1, 1944, the Rev. T. P. Dunn, District Superintendent, gave the message.

Dr. Morrow arranged to have the Rushing Family, Radio Gospel Singers of Lincoln, Nebraska, for the three services on opening day. Over 200 persons were in attendance at the Sunday afternoon service on that day.

ST. MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC CHURCH
Central City

The first Mass celebrated in Central City, then Lone Tree, was in the Section House occupied by the Rudolph Kombrink family in 1870, with Father Ryan of Columbus as celebrant. Those known to have attended included: Michael Tobin; John Donovan; John Byrnes; Mrs. Vaughn and her daughters, Mrs. M. L. Wright and Mrs. J. B. Whittaker; Thomas Kelley; R. H. Kombrink and wife; Michael Duffin and Stephen Heaton.

In 1876 a frame church building was erected on land acquired from the Union Pacific Railroad. In 1881 the Rev. Eugene Garry was the first resident priest.

On July 1, 1910 Saint Michael's Church was formally incorporated under the laws of the State of Nebraska.

The pastors serving through the years included: The Rev. Albert Hork, 1890; James Gleason, 1891; Florian Delfosse, 1897; William O'Connor, 1907; Felix Gebauer, 1927; Anthony Kluthe, 1931; Hugh Gately, 1936; Martin Brady; Bernard Teves, 1940 and Joseph Duhammel, 1944.

In June 1950 The Rev. Ignatius C. Spenner became pastor and under his guidance and direction the new Rectory was designed and completed in 1951. He also designed the present church edifice and celebrated the first Mass there on April 19, 1953. The church was dedicated on May 26, 1953 by His Excellency, The Most Rev. Gerald Bergen, Archbishop of Omaha.

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST SCIENTIST
Central City

Organized on March 2, 1905.

In January 1928 the former Agnew home at 17th Avenue and 20th Street was purchased and remodeled into a church edifice. It was dedicated, free of debt, on December 30, 1928.

The first Reader was Mrs. A. E. Clark and the second Reader was Miss Minnie Dunovan.

The first Reader at present is Mrs. Louella Smith and the second Reader is Mrs. Ina B. Campbell.

The first lecture on Christian Science was given in March 1906 by Mr. Buskirk. The church was first organized as the Christian Science Society, Central City, Nebraska. On December 7, 1928 it was granted the right to become First Church of Christ Scientist.

The Charter Members were:
Mrs. A. E. Clark, Mr. and Mrs. Olsen, Mrs. Thos. Drinkall, Mr. and Mrs. John Lock, Mrs. A. A. Traver, Miss Tillie Skow, Mrs. L. Chandler, Miss Minnie Dunovan, Mrs. Jorgenson, Thomas Drinkall, Miss Alma Barrows, J. B. Johnson, Mrs. R. G. Desch, Mrs. Sarak Newville, Mrs. H. A. Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Williamson, Mrs. Carns.

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ROY'S SERVICE CENTER
"Service is our Business"

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

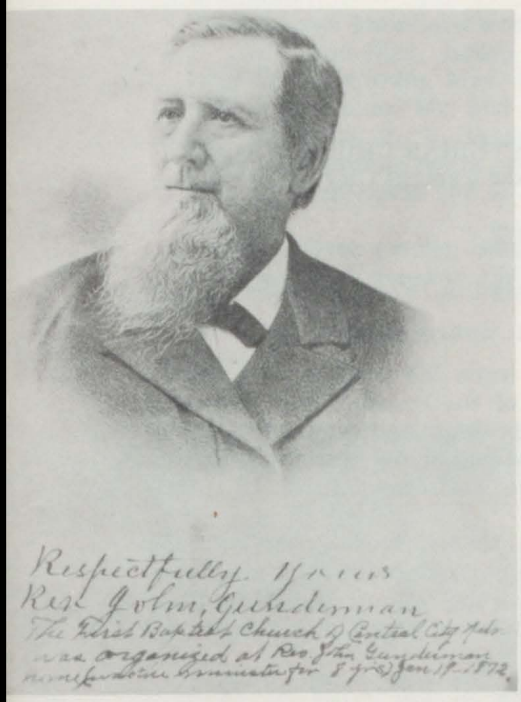
CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Central City

Organized as "Lone Tree Mission" in 1872, and as Christ Episcopal Church, March 12, 1882.

Church Edifice erected in 1882.

First Rector -- The Reverend H. C. Shaw, Present Rector -- The Reverend Robert Ellwood.

Charter Members:
Dr. and Mrs. Doolittle, Mr. Fleming, Mrs. Bartlett, William McEndree, James Vieregg Family, Albert Ewing Family, John Payne Family, Frank Parker Family, N. S. Belden, George Wells.



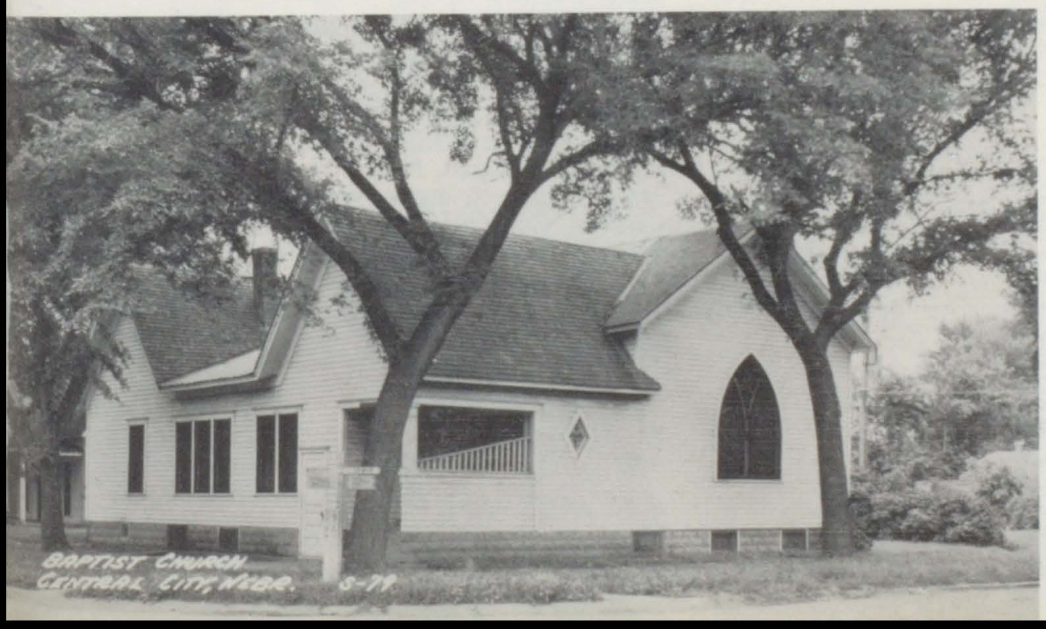
THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
Central City

Organized January 19, 1872, at home of Reverend John Gunderman in Lone Tree.

After holding services in a schoolhouse the church edifice was erected in 1874. This was the first church built in Central City and the second in Merrick County. The location was Lots No. 7 and 8, Block No. 10, original town of Lone Tree (now Central City). On February 4, 1899, this property was traded to Mary E. Persons for the north one-half of Lots No. 3 and 4, Block No. 18, original town of Lone Tree, where the church now stands.

The first pastor was Reverend John Gunderman who served 8 1/2 years, the present pastor is Reverend Clint Reser.

The Charter Members were:
Reverend John Gunderman, Orilla Gunderman, E. H. Wilder, Mrs. Julie A. Wilder, C. N. Carvier, Ira Jeffreys, Mrs. Hilton, Mrs. Ella McCabe and H. C. Osterhout.



Compliments of
SMITH ELECTRIC
Central City

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STATE THEATRE
Central City

METHODIST CHURCH, Central City

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
(NOW METHODIST CHURCH)
Central City, Nebraska

This organization dates from June 24, 1866, when the first religious society was formed. Formal organization of the church was completed in the spring of 1872.

Erection of the first church edifice was started in 1873, and completed in 1877.

The first pastor to serve this church was a Circuit Rider, Rev. T. B. Lemon. The present pastor is Rev. Charles E. Funk, who also ministers to the Fairview Methodist Church.

A complete list of the names of Charter Members is not available, but the following names are recalled:
Mr. and Mrs. John Miller, Mr. and Mrs. Albert Tunks, Mrs. M. J. Walker, George Clark, Mrs. Phoebe Crites.

REV. AND MRS. GEORGE W. NEWELL

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Of Lone Tree, Now Central City

Organized on August 3, 1872.

First Church edifice erected in 1874, and dedicated on October 11, 1874.

First organization steps were led by Rev. George R. Carroll, District Missionary of the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions for Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota, accompanied by the noted missionary, Rev. Sheldon Jackson, who came to Lone Tree on Saturday, April 13, 1872.

First meetings were held in a hall over Person's Store, which is now Gambles. The first church building, a one room frame structure, was erected on the lot now occupied by the Manse and which was donated by the County Commissioners.

The present church building was dedicated June 28, 1914.

The first pastor was Rev. George W. Newell and the present pastor is Rev. Robert O. McLeod. Twenty-one ministers have served.

The Charter Members were:
James and Elizabeth Jane Baird, Robert G. and Mary J. Baird, Charles E. and Martha E. Brown, William K. and Alica Burke, John and M. Ellen Hayes, Samuel and Mary Ann Leininger, John W. Martin, William L. and Mary Jane Martin, Caleb Persing, W. D. and C. O. Townley, David F. and Jennie White.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Central City

Compliments of
STRANBERG CARBUREATOR & ELECTRIC SERVICE

THE METHODIST CHURCH
In Palmer

In the late 1870's, before Palmer was a town, a small group of pioneers joined together to worship. Included in this group were Mr. and Mrs. Henry C. Wells, Mr. and Mrs. John Davis, Mrs. Hannah Davis, Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Templin, Mrs. Copeland and others. They met at the schoolhouse in District No. 36, located two miles north of the present town of Palmer. The first pastor of this group was Rev. William Espelin, 1881-1882. Part time services were held in the Church of Christ and later in the old Palmer Opera House.

In 1889 this group of Methodist people was formally organized into "The Methodist Episcopal Church or Class of Palmer" under the leadership of Rev. J. B. Leedom.

The Charter Members were:
Mr. and Mrs. Henry C. Wells, Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Curtis, Mrs. M. C. Cole, Mr. and Mrs. John Davis, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Templin, Mr. and Mrs. Z. E. Peck, Mrs. Pierce, Mr. and Mrs. Ramoth Sears, Miss Carrie B. Hull, Mrs. Hannah Davis and A. Wadsworth.

The first church building was erected in 1893 and remodeled in 1929.

The present pastor is Rev. Warthen T. Israel.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST
Palmer, Nebraska

In 1874 a group of ten disciples living southeast of Palmer laid the foundation for the organization of a church with J. H. Applegate and Henry M. Cox as Elders. Later, meetings were held in the old McGonagle house for about two years until the church was built in 1888. The McGonagle house still stands in Palmer.

The Charter Members were Henry M. Cox, E. J. Cox, N. C. Arrents, Mary Arrents, J. H. Applegate, M. E. Applegate, Chetser Green, John A. Liese, Margaret Liese, Michael Blade, Angeline Blade, A. M. Templin and B. S. Templin.

Rev. Humphries of Aurora, Nebraska conducted the first services in the church on July 13, 1888. A downpour of rain kept eleven of the congregation in the church building all night. The dedication service, conducted by Rev. John T. Smith of Nebraska City, was held on July 15, 1888. Student pastors and nonresident ministers served the church for many years.

The first resident pastor was Rev. Harmon H. Utterback, called in 1902 at a salary of $8.00 per week. Rev. Utterback served faithfully for many years and is now retired and resides near the church which he pastored.

The present pastor is Rev. Edward Maertens.

ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Palmer

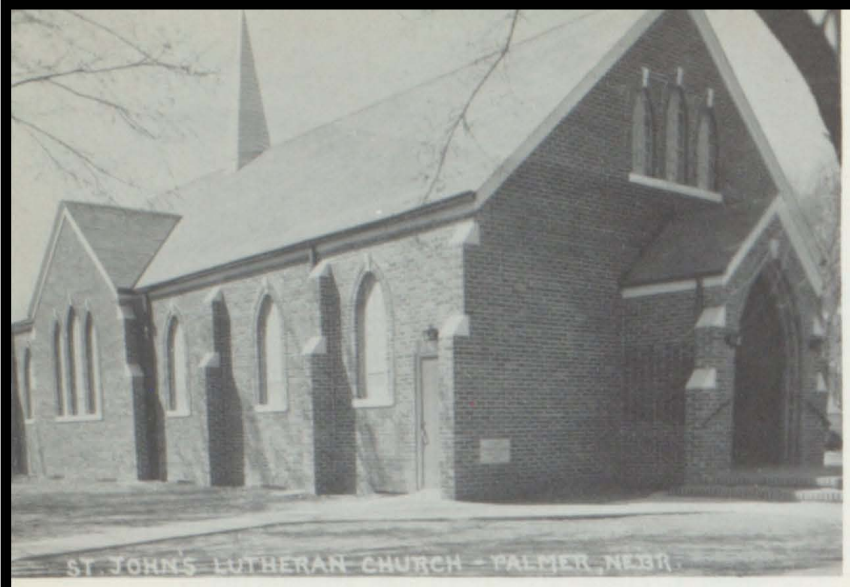
This organization dates back to about 1894. In this year a church building was erected and services were conducted by nonresident missionary pastors.

No complete list of members is available but the following names appear:
David Foster, Paul Haux, W. H. McKenney, Ruth McKenney and Blanche Widaman.

Services were discontinued and the church building was sold in 1931 to the Assembly of God. This organization continued for about ten years.

Compliments of
JENSEN HATCHERY
Central City

Compliments of
NIELSEN MOTOR & IMPLEMENT CO.



ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
(Missouri Synod)
Palmer, Nebraska

The persons who later organized this church attended services at Worms until formal organization of the Palmer Church on September 22, 1901. The first pastor was Rev. J. D. Schroeder, D.D., pastor of the Worms church. Services were held in the Palmer Church of Christ from 1898 to 1907. The first church was built in 1907.

The Charter Members were:
William Quandt, Robert Zuehlke, Bruno Burkhardt, Karl Loeffelbein, Karl Rudolf, Jr., August Rochlist, Adam Donscheske, Karl Rudolf, Sr., Herman Luebke, Henry Albers, Frank Dankert and John Henry Bruns.

The present pastor is Rev. K. H. Tieman.

The present church edifice was erected in 1949, the cornerstone laying ceremonies being held on June 5, 1949.

THE WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH
OF PALMER

This church organization is of comparatively recent origin and is pastored by Rev. Carl H. Dooley.

Services have been held continuously for the past several years. The congregation is looking forward to the day when a permanent place of worship can be had. This goal is about to be reached with the acquisition of a church building moved in from the Sunrise community northeast of Palmer, and placed on a previously provided basement room.

Charter Members in 1952:
Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Peck, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Eckstrom, Mr. and Mrs. Erwin Eckstrom, Mrs. George Eckstrom, Mrs. Clara Hawthorne, Rev. and Mrs. Carl Dooley.

Compliments of REIMERS, INC.
Central City

THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE
Palmer, Nebraska

Organized in Palmer, Nebraska in 1949.

The church building was purchased from St. John's Lutheran and moved to a different location.

The Charter Members were:
Mr. and Mrs. Lester Giersdorf, George Pontius, Norma Jean Pontius, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Stearman.

The present pastor is Mrs. Goldia Stearman.

EVANGELICAL UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH
Archer, Nebraska

First organization dates from 1872, when services were held in the Emmanuel Evangelical Church Community about six miles west of Chapman, Nebraska.

Early pastors were Rev. Radinsky, Rev. Fischer, Rev. Beckmann and Rev. Woelz.

Early church services were held in the schoolhouses in Merrick County School Districts No. 35 and No. 46. First church building was erected near Archer in 1884. Parsonage built in 1900. First resident pastor was Rev. C. Stauss. Present church edifice was erected in 1919.

Charter Members:
Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Wegner, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Rudolf, Mrs. August Retzlaff, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Schleuter.

Present pastor is Rev. Armin Vogt.

Archer E.U.B. Church

The Clarks, Nebraska
METHODIST CHURCH

The earliest available records in connection with this organization, have to do with meetings conducted by a Methodist minister, Rev. David Marquette, at Junction Ranch about three miles northeast of Clarks in 1871.

The first church edifice was erected in 1879-1880. Various changes and remodelings took place during the years. On Nov. 30, 1947, the church building was destroyed by fire. A beautiful new church building was erected at the same location and was dedicated, free of indebtedness, on April 16, 1950.

A noteworthy incident in connection with the fire was the fact that a large framed picture of Christ which hung on the west wall of the sanctuary was undisturbed, not even the glass broken. The same was true of a picture of the Christ Child on the north wall which was left leaning outward, in spite of the damage caused by the falling roof and ceiling of the building.

Mr. and Mrs. Granville Smith and son, Melvin had an active part in the activities of this church for many years. Mrs. Smith, over 90 years old, is the oldest living member of the church.

Among the names of the early day members, the following families appear:
Brunk, Burch, Wm. Stanley, Noble, Al Morse, Smith, Heater, Hartwell and John Cole.

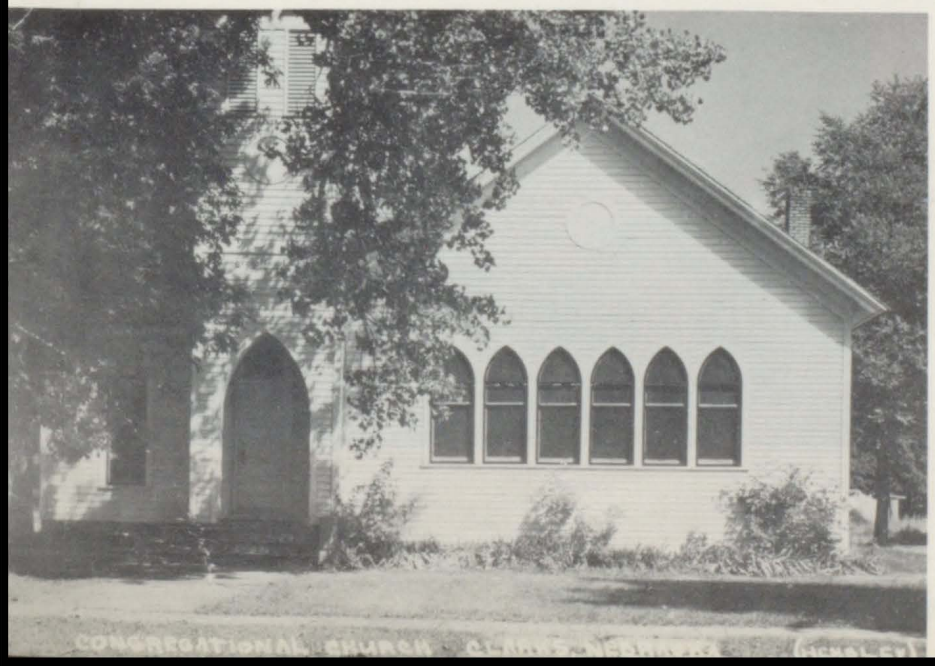
The present pastor is Rev. Walter E. Neth.

CLARKS CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
Clarks, Nebraska

This Church was organized in 1878, and the first Church edifice was erected the same year. Considerable remodeling has been done during the succeeding years. The 75th anniversary was celebrated in 1953.

The first pastor was Rev. George S. Desco and the present pastor is Rev. Paul W. Nelson.

The Charter Members were:
Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Morse, Henry Beardsley, J. B. Philbrooks, R. E. Wetherel, J. D. Porter, L. M. Chamberlain, J. H. Castle, S. H. Westgate, T. L. Dixon, M. M. Kohjer, H. M. Kohjer, J. T. McLean, Mrs. H. M. Lyons, W. C. Robinson, and Mrs. C. L. Hatch.



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SOLT MORTUARY
Central City

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JIM'S G. W. FOODS
Central City

ARCHER METHODIST CHURCH
Archer, Nebraska

The Archer church was originally part of the Fairview Methodist Church at Fauver's Corner near Archer, Nebraska, and organized as the Archer Methodist Church in Archer, Nebraska in the early 1890's.

The first sermon was preached in Archer Hall by Rev. C. F. Haywood.

The new church edifice was dedicated on February 11 1900.

Organization Members:

Mr. and Mrs. Burt W. Baker, Mr. and Mrs. C. D. Chapman, Mr. and Mrs. S. N. Gurney, Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Templin, Mr. and Mrs. Emil Hansen, Mrs. E. H. Wickham, Lina Wickham, Mrs. E. W. Lehr, Mrs. George Kull, Mrs. D. W. Overstreet and Mrs. M. H. Rawlings.

Present pastor, Rev. Warthen Israel.

FAIRVIEW METHODIST CHURCH
Archer, Nebraska

The first church organization was in the winter of 1872 and 1873 in Merrick County District No. 26 schoolhouse. The first pastor was Rev. Fairchilds. Other early church services were held in the Burke, Gardner Baker and Crites schoolhouses.

The first church edifice was dedicated on March 16, 1884 and the name FAIRVIEW adopted. The fine new church was built in 1951.

The names of the charter members of the Fairview Church are:

Rev. and Mrs. Esplin, Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Crites, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Jewell, Mr. and Mrs. C. D. Chapman, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Willeman, Mr. and Mrs. George Ferris, Mr. and Mrs. William Johnston, Mr. and Mrs. William Clark, Mr. and Mrs. George Clark, Mr. and Mrs. Albert Deselm and Mr. and Mrs. Amasa Insko.

Many pastors served this growing church and the following names appear, although possibly not in the order in which they served:

Rev. Fairchilds, Rev. Donaldson, Rev. Dressler, Rev. Marsh, Rev. Pearson, Rev. Hilderbrand, Rev. Esplin, Rev. Wilson, Rev. Fowler, Rev. Porterfield, Rev. Leedom, Rev. Haywood, Rev. Keyes, Rev. Donnelly, Rev. Vogt, Rev. Green, Rev. Molesworth, Rev. Rorick, Rev. Shacklock, Rev. McReynolds, Rev. Underwood, Rev. Trezona, Rev. Taylor, Rev. Campbell, Rev. French, Rev. Sanders, Rev. Morey, Rev. Porter, Rev. Howe, Rev. Romick, Rev. Runnels, Rev. J. H. Fowler, Rev. Geiger, Rev. Brink, Rev. Fry, Rev. Tipton, Rev. Fishel, Rev. Whitman, Rev. Lowell Jones, Rev. Dawson Park and Rev. Charles Funk.

During recent years, the Fairview field has been joined with that of Central City, in that the resident pastors of the Central City Methodist Church have served both charges.

Compliments of GAMBLES * SKOGMOS

ST. LAWRENCE CATHOLIC CHURCH
Silver Creek, Nebraska

Established as a Mission Church in 1902, the first building was erected in the fall of 1903. M. L. Rossiter, a Catholic banker of Silver Creek headed a campaign for funds that made possible the first church. 40 mixed families joined in this effort.

Father Rembert Stanowski, O.F.M. of Duncan served as the first priest in the Parish. In 1908, Father Edward Soliwowski of Karakow cared for the parish. Beginning in 1917, Father John Kunkel of Clarks served the parish for 20 years. In 1938, St. Lawrence was a mission of St. Rose of Genoa.

On June 17, 1956, St. Lawrence Mission Parish was officially incorporated as a parish of the arch-diocese of Omaha. Father John F. Wieczorek was the first resident pastor.

The following are the names of some of the earlier member families: Kulas, Dubas, Pollards, Dwyers, Shanahans, Donleys, Karges, Bacobis and Masons.

ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Silver Creek, Nebraska

Organized March 1, 1869, and church building erected in 1870 and dedicated in 1872 by the Bishop.

The first pastor was Reverend H. C. Shaw.

Among the Charter Members were: J. P. Shaw and E. C. Shaw and their families. These people were homesteaders in Silver Creek township.

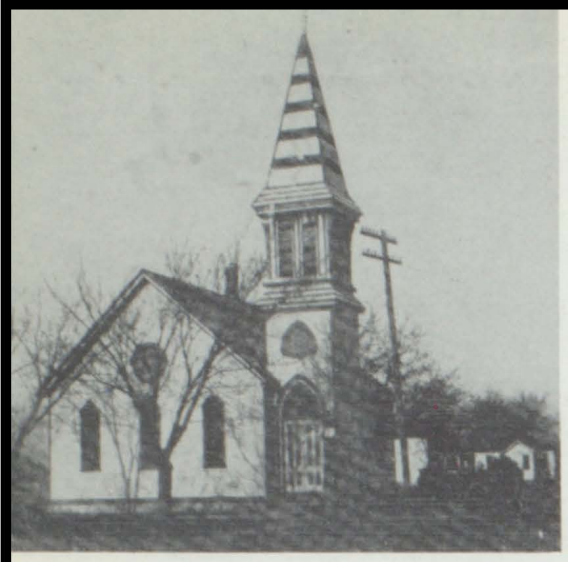
This church is said to be the first church in Merrick County. It has been closed for many years. The church building was torn down and the parsonage sold. The first marriage in this township was William Jarman and Bridget McDermit in the Episcopal Rector's study, December 26, 1870. The first marriage in the church was in 1871. The first religious services were held in a log cabin in 1867 and were conducted by Henry Shaw and Samuel Goodale. The first death was Ann Fuhrman, interment being in the yard of St. Stephen's Church in 1871.

SILVER CREEK CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
Silver Creek, Nebraska

The Congregational Church was organized March 5, 1874, with 12 charter members.

The church continued to serve its congregation for many years and the church building still stands, although services were discontinued a good many years ago.

The Reverend John Roberts was one of the early pastors.



THE FIRST METHODIST CHURCH
Silver Creek

The church was organized on March 29, 1888. The first meetings were held in what is known as Hill Hall in Silver Creek. The first pastor was the Rev. J. E. Moore, who came on the field March 24, 1888.

The first church building was erected in 1889 and work on the present church building was started about 1918 and was dedicated on September 11, 1921. The parsonage was built in 1924 and both buildings are in excellent condition. The present pastor is Rev. L. A. Hansen.

The present membership has grown to 189, with a Sunday School of 140. The church attendance averages 130. Some of the charter members were: Dr. E. L. Robinson, Dr. and Mrs. Crisp, and Mr. and Mrs. James.

THE CENTRAL CITY, NEBRASKA MONTHLY MEETING OF FRIENDS

This church was organized on March 16, 1899, and regularly established on August 31, 1899. Its organization was largely in connection with the early history of Nebraska Central College. Prior to the regular organization, the first church building was erected in 1898 and dedicated on January 15, 1899. The present church building was dedicated in 1909.

The first pastor was Rev. Herbert J. Mott whose untiring efforts during a lifetime of service contributed very much to the success of the organization.

The present pastor is Rev. Lindley J. Cook.

The following persons were Charter Members:

Berry S. Abel, Lettie Abel, Charles W. Abel, Bessie Abel, Herbert W. Abel, Esther M. Abel, Lillian E. Abel, Mary Reeder, Joseph Reeder, William Shelton, James Stephen, William E. Solt, Nellie A. Solt, John N. Thompson, Seth Compton, Olive Compton, Elwood Knight Family, Hugh Littleton, Lizzie Littleton, Herbert J. Mott Family, Joseph Phelps Family, Newton Potee Family, William Roberts Family, Bertha Wadsworth, Mary Ida Ward, Lettie H. Willoughby, William Williamson, Gertrude Goodrich.

Early records indicate that a Friends Meeting had been established in Clarks, Nebr. in 1887, and also an organization north of Clarks called Prairie View.

Compliments of CHRISTENSEN LIVESTOCK COMMISSION CO., Fullerton, Nebraska

Educational Development

By FRED A. MARSH

If I were 40 or 50 years younger, I would enjoy having an active part in preparation for our Centennial celebration. As it is, about all that I can do is to stand on the side line and yell "sick 'em!" Time dampens our ardor and readers who reach my age will learn that tasks which were once taken in stride and without wearisome exertion, become difficult, if not impossible to perform. However, I have agreed to prepare a brief summary of educational development in Merrick County, and I hope the following will be acceptable.

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When the original Merrick County Court House was built in 1871-'72, no provision was made for a county superintendent of schools. For more than 30 years that official officed with the clerk of the district court in a little room adjoining the space alloted to the county clerk. There were of course, no facilities for filing documents which should have been preserved and which would be valuable now in compiling a record of the early development of education in Merrick County. Census rolls and copies of important reports to the state department were kept around for a few years and then destroyed. From this it will be seen that much of the brief account which I shall write will not be well documented.

Merrick County was first organized into school districts in 1872 by Charles Mead, county superintendent of schools at that time. The book in which those boundaries are recorded is well preserved and all changes in district boundaries have been painstakingly inserted. The original school district map with all subsequent changes has also survived the viscisitudes of time. With the consolidations now going on these old divisions will soon be forgotten. We shall await with some merging the first crop of scholars from these "modernized schools." The old "District School" has turned out some hard to beat scholars, jurists, statesmen and divines.

Two of Mr. Mead's predecessors in office were John L. Martin and Ed Parker. Whether they held the office by appointment or were elected, I do not at present know, but I am trying to find out. I shall not attempt eulogies for any of Mr. Mead's successors except to say that they were all persons qualified to administer the affairs of the office. I have known them all personally and have pleasant recollections of every one.

John L. Martin and Ed Parker, two unique and eccentric characters were so deeply involved in the early history of Merrick County that I hope that some writer for the Centennial booklet may expand upon the mention which I am making of them. John L. Martin was the father of Henry Martin, one of the seven men from Merrick County who enlisted to fight for the Union. One of his daughters married James Vieregg, Merrick County's first white settler, for whom Vieregg township was named. He was an uncompromising, almost rabid, republican. He and my maternal grandfather, Jason Parker, who was an equally ardent democrat, clashed and almost came to blows. They were life long enemies. Mr. Martin had the offensive habit of biting the ear of any friend whom he chanced to meet. Tom Gosnell objected to this gesture of friendship and retaliated by biting Mr. Martin's ear so seriously as to require a doctor's attention.

Ed Parker, nephew of Jason Parker (my cousin twice removed) was probably the most colorful citizen that our county has ever had. His costume, designed, no doubt, to attract attention, consisted of tightly fitting buckskin trousers with a fringe of the same material along the legs. He wore his hair down on his shoulders and his hat was enormously large somewhat after the cowboy pattern. We have two pictures of him--one with a needlegun on his lap and the other taken with his wife, Ida, a beautiful and talented lady, who deserved a better fate than the one which befell her. Whisky got Ed just as it has millions of others. Mr. Parker was our county clerk for an extended period and reaped, I think, a considerable fortune locating settlers who wished to homestead in Merrick County. It is said that if he took a liking to a newcomer, he would put him on a good quarter section. Otherwise he might fare badly. But I am not writing biographies, as I am tempted to do, but a history of education in Merrick County.

I do not know when or where the first school was held in Merrick County. I have the daily attendance record kept in our district (No 23) by my cousin, Miss Evelyn Lowrey, for the month of May, 1872. I knew all of her pupils and the oldest, if living now, would be 100 years of age. The first school in district 4 (Central City) was taught by another cousin, Gertrude Conrad, in the little brick building, still standing, across the street north of the court house, now serving as an office for Mr. DeLancey.

Our county clerk, Mr. Jack Roubal, has been helpful in obtaining some information. Replying to an inquiry by my cousin, Roy Parker, Mr. Roubal writes as follows:

Dear Roy:

The following is the information I could dig out:

Court house and jail contract was let April 18, 1871, to be built at the same location of brick and stone. Bid was $12,800.00 in cash or $16,000.00 in bonds. The county elected to pay in bonds and the contractor got the bonds and had to dispose of them himself. Court and jail were completed January 1, 1872. The contractor was Chas. Lightfoot and the county commissioners were C. B. Hartwell, Jason Parker and Wm. McAllister.

The first elected county superintendent was Charles E. Mead, elected October 10, 1871. In 1878 school district No. 4, Central City, bought two lots namely 5 and 6 block 14 O.T. at the present site of the Methodist Church and parsonage. No doubt that must have been the first place where the school house was.

Jack

I also have a letter from Mrs. F. J. Clark giving well authenticated information about the first school held in the county. Readers will be interested in this letter:

Mr. Marsh:

In regards to your inquiry about records of the first Merrick County school, I have a scrap book of pioneer Merrick County, dating from its organization and among the articles is the following taken from the John L. Martin collection. "In 1866 John Martin, Clause Stoltenberg, William Hayter were elected as board of directors of school district No. 1. A log school house with roof of willow brush and sod was built and the first year a Miss Ellen Abbot taught with a salary of $35. The building and wages cost $100.

In 1866 Mr. Martin was appointed examiner of teachers, and the next year was elected as county superintendent of public instruction.

The first Sabbath school in Merrick County was organized in school district No. 1, June 30, 1867.

Mr. Martin's records were taken over by one son Blaine of Grand Island, but after his death, don't know what became of them, but a grandson, Guss Fonner of Grand Island had access to them and wrote quite an article for the Historical society that Mr. Martin had given to the Merrick County celebration of July 4, 1875, for the Centennial of the United States.

These articles are printed records from the county paper, but time of printing not saved.

Mrs. F. J. Clark
Central City

BELOVED CITIZEN DIES

As stated before, Merrick County was organized into school districts in 1872 by Charles E. Mead our county superintendent at that time. Mr. Mead, for whom Mead township and Mead school (No. 19) have been appropriately named, was one of the best loved citizens that Merrick County has had. His wife (nee Rena Summers) shared his popularity and it is a sad reflection that they were not permitted to share each other for a longer period of time. Mr. Mead, while engaged in getting wood from the Pawnee reservation, which had to be secured while the Loup River was frozen, contracted a severe cold which developed into T. B. A sojourn in Arizona failed to help him. His widow immediately resumed work in the education field and for more than 25 years was a beloved teacher in the Minnesota state normal school at Winona. Their son may still be living. If some reader knows his whereabouts, I am sure he would be delighted if you would send him a copy of this Centennial book.

The Meads were frequent visitors at our house, coming first for dental work and later on missions of friendship.

Mr. Mead was followed in office, as County Superintendent, by John Patterson, a brilliant, Irish born lawyer who practiced for more than half a life time in Central City. He was a graduate of the University of Wisconsin. Next came B. W. Baker, a fine scholar and excellent teacher--a graduate of the Pennsylvania state normal. Mr. Baker was succeeded by J. C. Martin, a lawyer, who later served as an assistant justice in the Nebraska supreme court. George Ayres, served for four years. Mr. Ayers, a lawyer of great ability, had the distinction of serving for 30 consecutive years as assistant to our attorney general. His advice was eagerly sought by everyone who needed legal counsel. Fred A. Marsh held the office for eight years. His claim for distinction lies in his having out lived all of his contemporaries, claiming an unbroken residence of 86 years in the most favored spot on God's green earth, Merrick County, Nebraska. Others who have held the office in more recent years and well known to many readers, are Miss Frances Kelley, Anson K. Holmes, Wm. Stone, Miss Margaret McCutchen Miss Pearl Simmons Mrs. Mary Hruza, Mrs. Margaret Turnbull and the present competent incumbent, is Clair Dixon.

Persons interested in the history of Nebraska Central College may be able to pick up

some information in the following paragraphs and pages.

NEBRASKA CENTRAL COLLEGE

From the first, beginning as early as 1856, Nebraska Methodists have evinced a lively interest in Christian education. At various times and in many locations Nebr. Methodist conference, and in some cases individual Methodists, have established schools of learning. The record of these foundings has been told painstakingly and in a most interesting way by Dr. Jackman in his "Nebraska Methodist Story." Some of the sites chosen for these schools were Omaha, Nebraska City, Peru, Osceola, York, Plattsmouth, Lincoln, Fullerton, Central City, and several others.

It was in 1879 that the North Nebraska conference decided to start a school at Fullerton. This school operated for only a short time and I do not know the size of its enrollment. When I went to teach in Nance County in 1890, the building was still standing, but had the appearance of having been long vacated. Of all the schools enumerated, our Nebraska Wesleyan University is the only one that has withstood the ravages of time with a present enrollment of about 1,000 students.

The academy at Fullerton having failed, the North Nebraska conference in 1884 decided upon a new institution, this one of collegiate status. Three towns, Norfolk, Fullerton and Central City wanted the school. Central City won out and the college building was erected in the summer of 1885. A mid-summer storm blew in the north gable of the building and occupancy was delayed until January, 1886. The first session of Nebraska Central college was held in the building now occupied by Safeway stores. Removal to the new college building was accomplished at the start of the new year and I was one of the first students to enroll. Readers must excuse my being personal in what I shall write about this school. Never officially connected with the institution, I have enjoyed an intimacy of relationship with people and events entering into its history that would enable me to write, a small volume, if recited in detail. I have known personally all of the teachers and practically all of the students connected with the school during both Methodist and Friends regime. For 32 consecutive years, while the Quakers were in charge, I addressed the student body at least once a year, a cherished memory.

Prior to 1884 Section 5-13-6 adjoining Central City on the northwest was an open expanse of prairie. It was decided that 100 acres in the center of this section would make a satisfactory campus for the new college. Title to this land was acquired by promising to establish a college and have its land surveyed into residence lots, every other lot to belong to the original owner. A committee consisting of N. R. Persinger and wife, James Stephen and wife, J. M. Sparks and wife, J. C. Holden and wife, O. L. Barton and wife having acquired title, by the above means, on July 21, 1885, deeded the land to North Nebraska conference and the money acquired from the sale of lots was applied on the cost of the building, already in process of construction.

The school promised well at first. Interest for a time ran high. A number of homes and at least two boarding houses sprang up, all of which have now disappeared. Under the direct management of Prof. J. K. Stableton, principal and Miss Ellen M. Austin, preceptress, attendance increased, mounting at one time to about 200. The first president was Dr. Marquette followed by Dr Maxwell and Dr. Crane. During the three years of its existence the college turned a class (1888) of four members, Wm. Fowler, Joseph Sparks, Henry O. Chapman and Miss Jessie Benton. After three years the church found it too burdensome to support two schools and decided to concentrate its support on Nebraska Wesleyan. Heart broken, Prof. Stableton went back into public school work, heading the schools at Lexington, Nebraska, for 16 years. He then did post graduate work at Harvard, after which the taught two years at Charleston, Illinois, and was then elected to the superintendency at Bloomington, Illinois, serving for 19 years and resigning over the protest of teachers, scholars and patrons. A wonderful man who started many boys on the upward way.

FRIENDS TAKE OVER 1898-99

Abandoned by the Methodist conference, the college property was taken over by James Stephen who in 1898 negotiated with the Society of Friends to establish a college which would be operated under the auspices of that church. Their 50 years of sponsorship began in the fall of 1899 with Prof. Riley Haworth as president. Others serving in that capacity were Sam Haworth, E. Hadley, Eli Parisho, Floyd Perisho, Stacy McCracken, Homer Coppock, Stephen Myrick, O. W. Carrell, Rev. Carrell served for 31 years. He and his wife are now valued faculty members of Doane college located at Crete, Nebraska.

This narrative, already too long cannot be extended to cover, in detail, the 50 years during which the Friends operated the college. Consecrated Christian men and women made noble sacrifices in its behalf. Hundreds of students benefitted by the instruction and moral

discipline which it afforded. Many of its alumni have held positions of high trust and responsibility.

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SCHOOLS OF FIRST INTEREST IN MERRICK COUNTY

Our schools have always been a first interest with the people of Merrick County. Our first school buildings, many of them still standing, were modest, but better on the average than the homes in which our people lived. Districts 23 and 43 were the only ones that had sod school houses and I attended school in both of them. About 1920 Districts 8, 15, 18, 23, and 31 decided upon two-room schools and operated for several years on a 9-year curriculum. Only two of these schools have continued that practice.

Our five towns have been lavish in their expenditures for education facilities. For instance the total value of all school property in Central City is given as $ 785,840 (figures by Supt. Cox). Few cities of that size can report any such investment.

Miss Dixon, county superintendent, reports the total value of all school property in the county $9,802,350. The average wage for rural teachers last year was $2,502. This compared with about $300 when I began teaching in 1890. Our school population has dropped from about 3,200 in 1890 to 2,310 in 1957.

CLARKS SCHOOL DISTRICT
Reported by Miss Dixon

The Clarks school district was organized in 1871, with Sarah J. Allan and Mrs. D. Martyn as the first teachers. The first class, which graduated in 1887, consisted of two members, both of whom are deceased. Of the second class of seven, who finished in 1889, Mrs. Maude Brown, Mrs. Laura Brown and Mrs. Sophia Black are still living.

That year, the school year was shortened from ten months to nine. There were six teachers on the faculty with T. K. Galvin as superintendent at $85.00 per month.

In 1895 names familiar to some of the "old-timers" begin to appear in the record: J. G. Mote, Superintendent, with Prudence Baird, Nellie Baird, Laura Gilbert, Clara James, Katie Dodge, listed as teachers. In 1910, W. C. Green was superintendent followed by E. L. Witte, John L. Zink, R. S. Stevens, H. H. Zemer, Harry Vedder, F. I. Rezek, Melvin Abrahamson, O. A. Knott, R. J. Strickland.

From point of service Harry Vedder served as head of the school system for the longest period of time, thirteen years, followed by Robert J. Strickland, who will begin his twelfth year as superintendent in September, 1958.

In 1933, Miss Lelia Moorman came to Clarks as principal of the high school where she remained until her retirement in 1953, and where she still resides.

The first school house in Clarks was south of the Union Pacific tracks. In 1880, it was moved to the site where the Cahill family now live. In 1889 the first brick school house was built on the site of the present building. It was torn down to make way for a new building in 1917, to which only recently has been added a fine new gymnasium and auditorium and four elementary classrooms.

PIONEERS IN EDUCATION AT SILVER CREEK

Early settlers were anxious to provide a basic education for their children, and their experience in the Silver Creek community is probably typical of other communities. The following record of education at Silver Creek is taken verbatim from an excellent 15 page history of the town written several years ago by I think, one of the Terry sisters:

The first efforts in education consisted in organizing a private school, taught by Miss Clamina Goodrich in 1870. The children assembled in one room of the Cyrus Lee Hotel. Mrs. Lute North was pupil of the early day schools, and informs us that the teachers were paid quarterly, by collections. A district school was organized in 1871, and a small school house erected. The children multiplied in great numbers, and it became necessary to move the primary grades into a small building east of George Merrils present residence. The teacher was Mrs. Lowry. In course of time the first school building was doubled in size and E. L. Martson and Julua Sprague were the instructors. This building became too small and was sold to Ed. Towlee who divided it and made two residences. They were at this date in the Towslee addition and owned by Mrs. R. O. Minic and Mr. John Flinn. The new school building was a four room, two story structure built in 1886, by John A. Alpaugh. This building in time, became too small and sold to C. R. Metzer who used the lumber for out buildings and to partly construct the residence of his son Malin, which burned recently. The present school building was erected in 1910. It is a brick structure and accomodated nine teachers.

The North Ward of the Silver Creek school began its history in a building of Charles S. Terrys, on Section 18. At present it is occupied by James Blair on the Fred Terry farm north of Silver Creek. It was built by Charles Davis

about the time he built the Episcopal Church. Mrs. Ersin McFarlin nee Kate Clark, was the first teacher.

Our home girls, most of them children of pioneers, have played an important part in the education of Silver Creek. A partial list is as follows:

Pauline Wooster, Julia Terry, Blanch O'Connor, Nellie Hill, Harriet Terry, Pearl Simmons, Myrtle Harris, Sadie Terry, Cora Martin, Mable Cremeen, Mayme Kula, Bethel Sprague, Thurma Sprague, Bernice Simmons, Nita Buchholtz, Viva Hurst, Elsie Sprague, Julia Sprague, George Bentz, Hugh Swortwood, Charles Wooster.

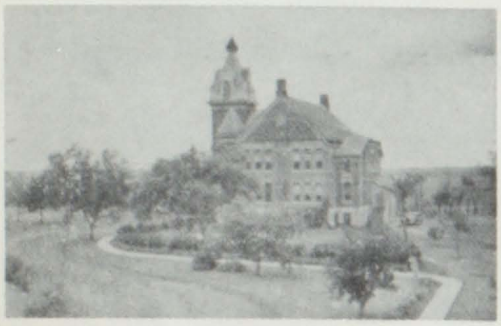
The first annual Commencement of the Silver Creek High School was held June 6, 1892, in the Congregational Church. The members of the class were: Hattie Terry, Mary Milliman, Lottie Lee, Warren Turk, Grace Benster, Julia Terry, Valedictorian; Ward Clark, prophet and historian; Edith Turk, salutatorian. J. F. Connor was Superintendent. (end of quote).

The history from which the above is taken, has so far escaped publication. But it represents too much labor and painstaking care to be lost to the public. Someone, now living in Silver Creek, should see to it that it finds its way into print. I am returning the copy to Mrs. Fred Meredith, 334 - 2nd Ave., S.E., LeMars, Iowa.

A number of changes, of course, and improvements have been made at Silver Creek since the above educational record was written.

SIX SCHOOL MEN OF THE EARLY 1890's. Which one is County Superintendent? It's the one demonstrating with pencil and paper. Standing: E. R. Farnham, Cliff Jeffries, Wm. Gorrell, James Brannan. Seated: Anson K. Holmes, and Fred A. Marsh, County Supt.

Mrs. Charles Mead, a devoted and conscientious teacher.



Nebraska Central College

One of Merrick County's two-room rural schools in 1923, showing plenty of pupils for two teachers. It is School District No. 8 on the Ormsby road west of Central City.

Compliments
of
NORDSTEDT
CLOTHING
Central
City

MERRICK COUNTY TEACHERS' INSTITUTE IN ABOUT 1910.
There were more teachers in the County then than there are now.

Palmer's First Schoolhouse
Built In 1888

PALMER HIGH SCHOOL

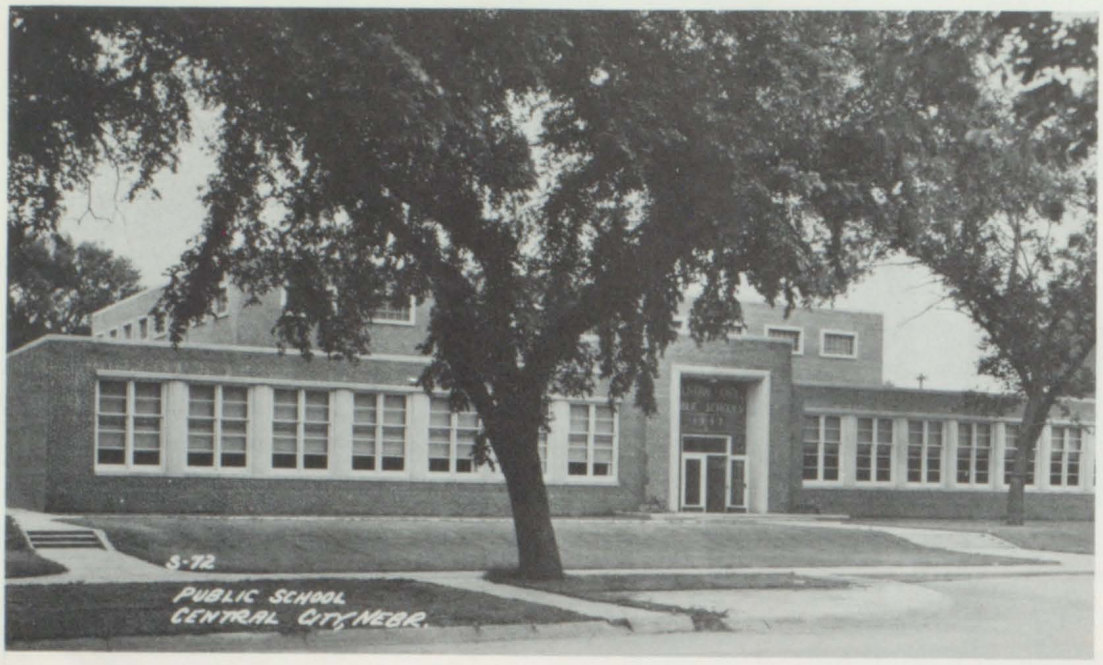
Palmer Schools 1888-1958

Education has advanced a long way in Palmer since the first schoolhouse was built in 1888. In 1953, the fine new auditorium and gymnasium was constructed to add to the facilities of the school. With overall dimensions of 60 by 110 feet this building provides a large size basketball floor with adequate seating room, stage, modern kitchen facilities, rest rooms, and basement dressing rooms for athletes.

The year 1958 ushers in a new era for Palmer schools. Ten rural school districts in this area have been consolidated with Palmer school district No. 49. To provide transportation, a fleet of six or seven big school buses will need to be provided. Additional school buildings will need to be constructed. For temporary use, two or more rural schoolhouses will be moved into town for class rooms.

Districts consolidating are: Numbers 49,31,36, 63,47,58,51,60, and 4 of Merrick County, 61 of Nance County, and 52,69,80 of Merrick, Nance and Howard Counties.

Compliments of
CENTRAL FARM DEVELOPMENT
Central City



Education In Central City

There remains yet an additional word to be said about the development of Central City's educational system. The first school, as already stated, was held in the little brick building, still standing across the street north of the court house. The teacher was Gertrude Conrad, aftwards Mrs. C. W. Adams.

In 1876, School District 4 (Central City and vicinity) acquired the lots now occupied by the Methodist Church and parsonage. There the first school building was erected, a two room structure which served the needs of the town until the present school site was decided upon.

In the winter of 1877 or 78, I spent a week with my half brother who was living in Central City with Diton Reynolds and attending school. I went to school with him everyday and formed many acquaintances. B. W. Baker taught the upper room and Miss Fora Porter the lower. Will Vierigg was accounted the best scholar in the school and Grace Traver the outstanding athlete. I remember that she could outdo all of the boys in athletic contests.

In the early eighties a contract was let to Rupert Vieno to build a new high school of brick on the present school site. Mr. Vieno's bid proved far too low and he was not able to complete the building which served in its unfinished state for several years. This building was long since dismantled to make room for a newer and better structure. A ward school in the north part of town takes care of the little folk in that sector. A splendid auditorium is the latest addition to Central City's educational facilities. This auditorium, flanked on either side by a splendid classroom building completes a setup of which Central City and Merrick County can well be proud.

Superintendent Cox has gone to great pains to procure names of teachers, especially superintendents and their tenure of service. To this list I have added many names from memory. The list is too long to permit of publication. Besides some would certainly be left out. Here are a few with outstanding terms of service. Miss Rachel Young, 40 years; Mrs. Nellie Fry, 18 years; Prof. M. L. Crandal, 22 years; Miss Berniece Anderson, 16 years; Mrs. Dorothy Mills, 14 years. Many others served long terms but I cannot give the years.

Any one who is really interested in the history of Central City schools should examine the Yearbook for 1935 which celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the first graduating class of 1886, composed of Pearl McEndree, Metta Porter and Gertrude Roth McHenry. This is a wonderful volume which came to my hand too late to embellish a rather drab recital. In it is a record of every class for 50 years. Copies of this book should be cherished by those who have it. Mr. and Mrs. Ted McEndree brought it to my attention.

Archer Schools

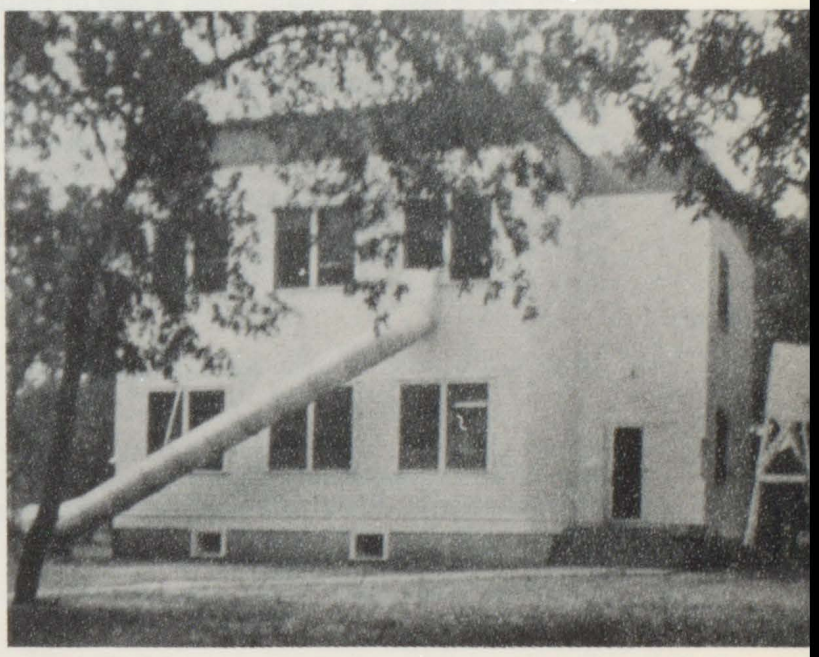
First schoolhouse serving the Archer community. Later it became a home for the Lehr family. Mrs. Lehr is standing in the doorway, Addie at the corner, and Francis and George by the bicycle.

District 46 school building burns in 1920.

DISTRICT 46
ARCHER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Before District 46 came into being there was a schoolhouse located between the present homes of Albert Wegner and Guy Eckles which served the area. District 46 officially opened school in the fall of 1892. Henry Chapman was the first instructor. Fred A. Marsh taught the upper elementary room throughout the school year of 1897-'98. Mr. Marsh served also, as regent of the University of Nebraska for a number of years and as county superintendent of Merrick County. The school was located on the present site and was a two story structure. In 1920 it burned and school was held in the building north of the present implement house while the new building (the present one) was being built. The first eighth grade graduates were Bessie Baker, Harry Lehr, Alice Templin, Carl Hansen, Elsa Liebhart, Francis Lehr, Jessie Persinger, Mae Whitmore and Rannie Baker.

In the fall of 1925 the first full four year high school opened in District 46. High School previous to 1925-'26 was not a full four year school. Twelve students were seniors and were graduated that year. They were Katherine Hughes, Edna Brittin, Leonard Van Pelt, Herbert Stander, Dean Eckhoff, Viona Suck, Lola Belle Woodward, Mary Gardner, Elizabeth Sinsel, Ursual Held, Evelyn Bonness and Virginia Lindgreen. Archer continued to maintain a full four year high school until the spring of 1957.



The present Archer Schoolhouse.

Agricultural and Industrial Development

By Donald F. Sampson

"For many days and weeks our pilgrims had been journeying over the ventureless waste of the great plain, wearied with its death-like monotony. As may readily be supposed, the wide, green valley of the Platte had to them unusual charms. The little patches of sod corn by the roadside that they occasionally passed looked so green and luxuriant, the little earth-covered cabins of the settlers, few and far between though they were, looked so cozy and comfortable to them, who had passed so many months without seeing any human habitation whatever, that they were more and more persuaded that the land in which they were journeying was a goodly land, and that the parched, dreary, and irreclaimable desert was passed. So entirely were they convinced of this that at night, when they halted at the earth-covered cabin of one of the settlers, it required but little setting forth on the part of said settler of the good qualities of the soil and climate to induce them to make up their minds to halt for a season, at least, and look around. With that halt of our pilgrims to look around the die was cast; they never continued their journey." So wrote Wells Brewer, one of the first five settlers of Merrick County, and its first historian, of his return from the Pikes Peak gold rush late in 1859. Though he recognized its advantages, he could not possibly have dreamed of the extent to which it would be developed in the succeeding 100 years.

No railroads, no post office, no stores, no roads, and no inhabitants other than Indians,--only sod-bound prairie--such was Merrick County when, in 1858, it was created by legislative enactment and "Lone Tree Station," its first building, was erected by the Western Stage Lines. But "Lone Tree Station" never did exist as the official town of the settlers. The first post office was at Shoemaker's Point, near Chapman. Until 1869, after the Union Pacific established the Original Town of Lone Tree, and those of Clarks, Silver Creek and Chapman, the only post offices were located at the homes of different settlers, these homes being known as "ranches". It would have been difficult to visualize then the post office of today, and the daily delivery of mail almost to the very door of every person in the country, both urban and rural.

The coming of the Union Pacific railroad in 1866 not only established town-sites, but also provided a more rapid means of travel and transportation for the products of this agricultural community. The early history of the struggles of the settlers for a "competing" railroad is a saga in itself. But it was not until 1887, when the Burlington Route was extended from Aurora to Greeley Center that any "competition" was established.. What a transition!--From 4 days by horse and wagon to Omaha, then a day by train, then to 4 hours, and now an hour and forty-seven minutes--or even less by air! A similar transformation has taken place in the handling of freight, both in speed and weight, from the days of the ox-team, the horse-drawn freighter, and even the little railroad car of eighty years ago, to the present high-speed, diesel-powered trains hauling 50 or more 40-foot cars at 50 to 60 miles per hour, or the trucks that travel up and down our highways in a never-ending stream.

There were no stores, as such, in Merrick County prior to the coming of the railroad, but practically every "ranch" along the established trail was a store of sorts. An ad, made with lamp-black on a piece of cracker-box cover tacked to a cedar post, read as follows:

FLOUR COFFEE SUGAR BACON

MOLASSES TOBACCO CIGARS

AND WHISKEY

This little ad emphasizes the limited selection available that was characteristic of "stores" for many years. But it contained the staff of life, a little sweetening, a little meat, and proof beyond doubt that coffee-drinking, smoking and "imbibing" are not twentieth century innovations.

The flour, the coffee, the sugar, the molasses, and possible the whiskey, were in barrels. The requirements of each customer were scooped or drained from the barrels. Not only have the past 100 years seen a tremendous development in the varieties and selections of the items offered, but the methods of packaging and handling have undergone an even greater change. Even 50 years ago the stock of canned goods in a grocery store occupied mighty little space. But there were rows of barrels, crates and boxes, all open to tempt the prospective purchaser--and maybe the flies. Cookies came in barrels, or in boxes about 12 by 12 by 12 inches. You didn't have to buy a barrel or a box; you bought by the pound. The storekeeper, who may have just finished sacking potatoes or filling the kerosene can, put the cookies in a sack for you. It was awfully handy, and not considered particularly bad manners, to do a little sampling before making any decisions. Fresh vegetables were a very rare item, and any available were usually the product of a local gardener. Frozen fruits and vegetables were, of course, not developed until such recent times that almost anyone old enough to read this will remember when they were introduced.

By contrast, the grocers' shelves today are lined with cans and small individual boxes of almost every conceivable product fit for human consumption. The meats are all in clean, refrigerated counters, the dairy and kindred products in open topped refrigerators, and fresh vegetables of every kind are neatly arranged on cooled counters. Nearly everything but fresh meats and vegetables are ready packaged and the housewife takes her cart, waits on herself, and may encounter only the check-out clerk.

Virtually every other type of retail establishment has undergone similar changes and improvements.

The early ox-teams and horses neither had nor wanted good roads. The trail was adequate, easily followed, and easy on their feet. If it rained, they could pull out of the track and travel on the sod of the centuries. But with the twentieth century came the automobile and a demand for better roads. First, the prairie roads were graded to provide better drainage and a more even surface. But a graded road could be a pretty slippery place after a rain, and about 1922 the use of gravel was begun on some of the principal state and national highways. Gravel roads were still dusty, and experiments began about the same time with concrete roads---16 feet wide. By 1930, considerable stretches of state and national highways were being paved, and today we have a network of paved and graveled roads in Merrick County that leaves almost no farmstead without one past its door. As the Platte River was the guide for the early traveler, and later for the Union Pacific railroad, so it was that the Lincoln Highway, the country's principal transcontinental highway, followed the same general route and traverses the county from end to end with as many as 4,000 cars and trucks passing a given point in a 24-hour period at the peak of the tourist travel.

Although remaining predominantly agricultural, Merrick County is admirably adapted to industry, with an abundant supply of water easily obtained, low electric rates, and natural gas available in much of its area. The first industrial development was in 1872, when Merrick County, by a vote of its people, "loaned its credit to Mr. J. G. Brewer for the term of ten years upon the condition that he should construct a water power from the Platte River and erect a grist mill on Section 31, Township 13 North, Range 6, and operate the same as a public grist mill, grinding for toll, not to exceed the rate of one-sixth." This was only the forerunner of numerous flour mills that were operated in the county, but all have disappeared in the wake of the centralization of the food industries.

A number of creameries have operated in Merrick County, and Farmers Co-operative Creameries at Central City and Palmer are in operation at the present time.

Merrick County has some very fine smaller industries, such as the Grosch Irrigation Industries at Silver Creek, Lemmerman's Hatchery at Palmer, and Armour's poultry processing plant and Randy's Steaks in Central City, and will always welcome more of these sound, income-producing institutions.

The history of Merrick County's agricultural growth has been one of trials and tribulations, but of ultimate success.

In the summer of 1863, the Platte River went dry--a sight familiar to those of us in this age. This was alarming to the early settlers, many of whom feared that some landslide in the mountains had diverted the currents of its tributaries and that its dryness might be permanent. By November, however, the water began to flow again, and their minds were eased.

The first "depression" of the early settlers occurred in 1869. The welfare of the community at that time was largely dependent upon the industry which supplied the railroad with cord-wood for its engines. Large supplies had been cut, hauled to town and stacked along the railroad when word came that the railroad had found the coal of Wyoming and announced they would not complete their contract. It was two years before the railroads were forced to pay up and times were so desperate that Mr. J. H. Berryman, who had the first and only store in Central City at that time, closed his store and went to work in the fields.

The years of 1874 and 1875 saw crops completely ruined by grasshoppers, and the area was visited by devastating hail storms in 1882 and 1884. A county-wide flood came in June of 1891, and the first severe drouth in 1893, 1894, and 1895. Other storms, floods and drouths have occurred at intervals throughout the years, but few things did more to change the agricultural face of Merrick County than the drouth and depression years of the 1930's, extending from 1934 through 1940.

The years of 1932 and 1933 had been years of abundant harvests, although prices had been on the down-grade since the stock market crash of 1929. Land had depreciated by 50% or more under its value in the 1920's. By the fall of 1933, corn was selling from 10¢ to 15¢ a bushel. Hay was $3 and $4 a ton. Many a farm had been purchased during the boom years of the 1920's and carried a mortgage against it of more than it was worth in 1933. Six percent interest payments could not be met with the proceeds of 10¢ corn, and many went into default.

Early 1934 was uneventful, but no rains came in the spring--nothing but hot, blistering winds. By summer, hay that had been sold in March at $3 per ton cost $20 to replace. Corn that had been sold the fall before at 10¢ in an attempt to pay expenses, was worth $1. Many farmers had to sell practically all of their crops in 1933 to pay expenses, but managed to keep their livestock. They had no money to buy the feed they did not raise in 1934, so the livestock became worthless.

The misery of humans and the hunger of livestock was such that probably no one who did not see it could ever believe. Men jumped at the chance to work a 10-hour day for a dollar. Evan so, Merrick County was more fortunate than some of its neighbors, particularly to the north and south, as the Platte Valley did produce some small crops and some forage. That period marked the beginning of government subsidies for the farm and they have been with us ever since.

Full grown cows sold for less than $10. Hogs were from $1.50 to $2.00 per hundredweight. One of the most sumptuous meals this writer can remember was one at which twelve hungry young people sat down to a roast pig dinner. They probably didn't succeed in eating over half the pig, which had been purchased at the Community Sale for 69¢.

As the early pioneers had overcome their hardships, so the people of Merrick County lived through the 1930's, coming out of them a wiser, albeit poorer, citizenry.

Irrigation had been talked as early as 1876, and some feeble but unsuccessful attempts had been made at ditch irrigation in the county. Areas to the west of us had been successfully using ditch irrigation for years, and some daring souls had put down irrigation pumps in Merrick County, before the drouth. However, it was not until this disastrous era, 1934 to 1940, that the people came to realize that adequate irrigation would have alleviated a great part of the distress of that period.

So it was that the farmers of Merrick County began to sink irrigation wells, at long last realizing that they had an abundant supply of underground water easily obtainable in large quantities for irrigation. Today, although small in size, Merrick County has the third-largest number of wells of any county in the state.

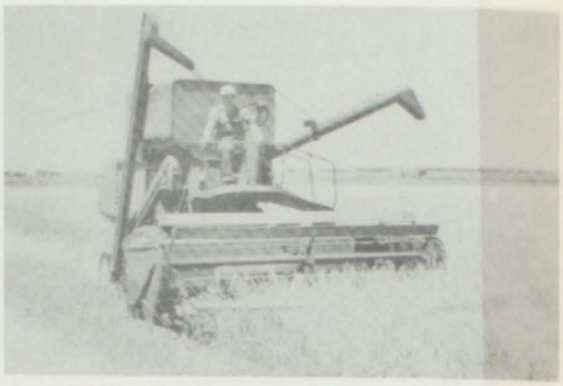
With irrigation came the levelling of the land, with great bulldozers and scoops, so that the waters could flow more uniformly and with less waste. The use of commercial fertilizers--first nitrogen, then more balanced mixtures of nitrogen, phosphates and potash, and now even trace elements such as magnesium and zinc--has at least doubled the yields of corn, Merrick County's present basic crop. While soy beans and sugar beets have been raised sparingly in this county, both are raised successfully. Only oats, of the more basic crops, seems not to have yielded to the advances of fertilizers and improved seeds.

Irrigation has brought about a tremendous change in land values. Not only has it greatly increased values because of the assurance of a crop and consequent stability of the operators, but it has transformed areas formerly considered poor for crop production into some of the most desirable land in the county. "Poverty Ridge," a belt of land through the center of the county, was known virtually from coast to coast to be unable to withstand even the dry weather of an ordinary season and to be so undesirable that no loan company would make a loan of any kind on it. Irrigation has transformed that area into some of the most desirable land in the county, and it is now often referred to as "Prosperity Ridge."

Keeping stride with the improvements in crops and their production, Merrick County's citizenry has always been keenly interested in the improvement, raising and feeding of livestock. At about the turn of the century, the area was known as the "livestock feeding center of the world." Entire train-loads of cattle and sheep have been unloaded at a single stockyards for feeding purposes. Times and transportation have changed, but many of the county's farmers are engaged in the feeding of livestock and countless thousands are shipped annually. Beef production is an integral part of our economy and pages could be devoted to the evolution from the "long-horn" steer of yesteryear to the prize beef animal of today and the part that the citizens of this county had in its development.

An early settler, writing in 1874, said, "Indeed, it was generally admitted, in those days (1860), that this would never be much of a farming country, not altogether because the climate was such that farm products could not be successfully grown,---but because there would be no market---. Stock raising, it was thought, was the only use this vast treeless, mineless region could ever be put to. Only a stock ranch every eight or ten miles, with a thousand or two head of cattle, was all any of us old settlers ever expected to see." He had seen what he thought was a great change in 14 years. What would he think if he could see Merrick County today? And probably no one who reads these lines is any more able to visualize the development in the next 100 years than was the early settler of the 100 years following his arrival.

Then-and-Now



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